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"Mr. Abbe has written of a town he calls Vernon, in Massachusetts, yet as we follow the life of this town its boundaries seem to reach out and envelop three others and we are remembering Atchison, Winesburg, and Spoon River"

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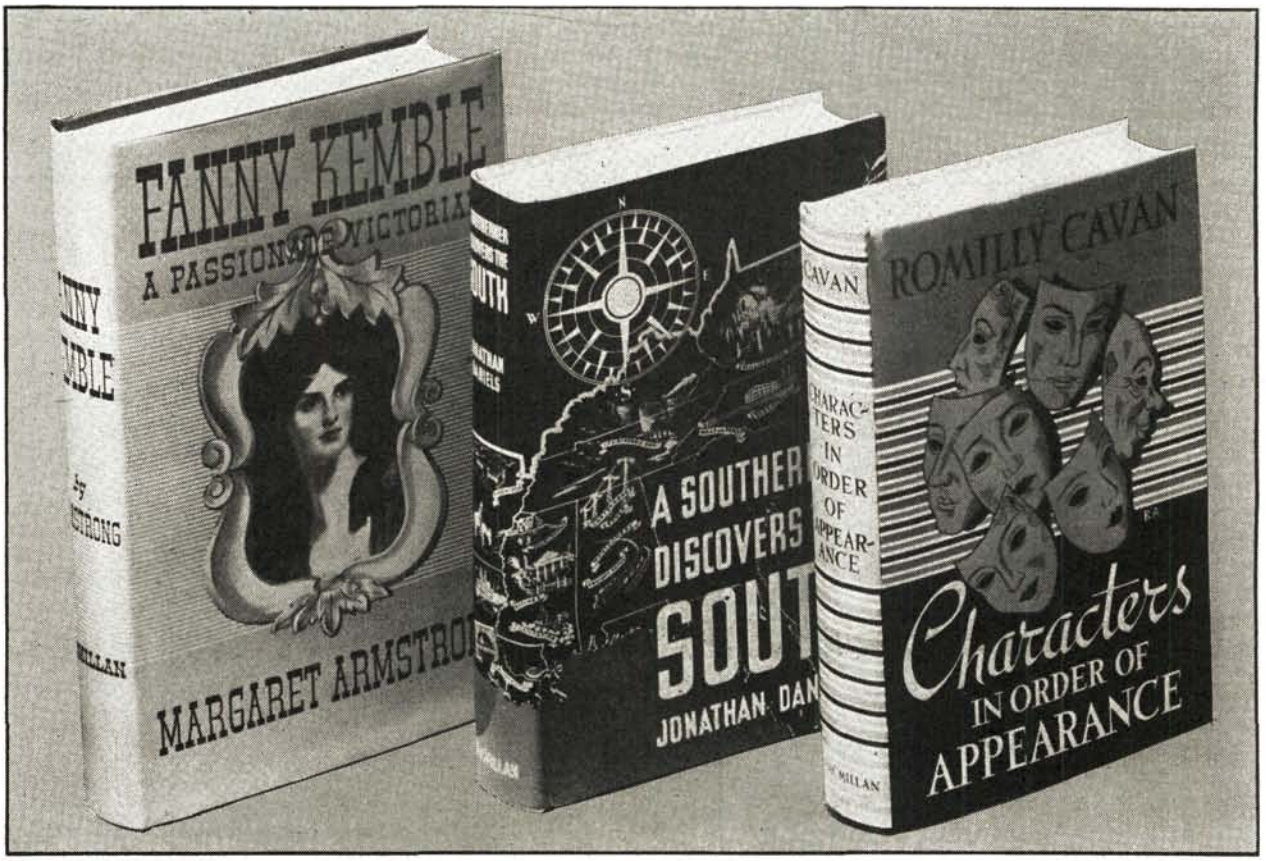

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The Novels of Willa Cather

BY HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

Beneath Willa Cather's "quick sympathy there is a Roman gravity, a sense of the dignity of life, which contemporary fiction . . . has mainly lost."

ALREADY possessing the distinction of having become a classic in her lifetime, Willa Cather may now contemplate with pride the twelve handsome volumes of her writings in a limited edition designed for the carriage trade. If simplicity is the last refuge of the complex, it is understandable why this edition appears: there is something sanitive and calm in this writing, which appeals especially to cultivated and wealthy book-lovers, weary of the turmoil of social fiction. Miss Cather reduces life to its nobler elements. She knows nothing of international politics, labor problems, the devaluation of currencies, or the insanities of the post-war world. Only two of her books* touch upon these aspects of life—"One of Ours" (1922) and "The Professor's House" (1925). In "One of Ours" the World War exists only that Claude may die obscurely in it for the reason that thus to die satisfies his self-respect; and in "The Professor's House" the rumors of our day are only a troubled thunder in the background of Professor St. Peter's personal dilemma. In no sense an escapist, Miss Cather has been content to show what life is or may be when it is lived away from the false fevers of civilization.

If one puts aside "April Twilights" (1903), a collection of youthful verse, and "Literary Encounters," essays and sketches of literary figures written between 1922 and 1936, the rest is fiction which falls into three general divisions: stories about artists, mainly musicians; stories about life in the West or under frontier conditions; and stories connected with the Catholic church. Even "Alexander's Bridge" (1912), though much of the action occurs in London, reaches its climax in Canada; the middle third of "The Professor's House" is set in New Mexico; and only "My Mortal Enemy" (1926), a slight sketch, fails to fit into the classification. But even in that book Molly Driscoll, if she is not a professional artist, is at least an artist by temperament.

But the classification is superficial. There is a deeper unity in this work. I do not know what impulse set Miss Cather to writing her historical novels about Catholic life, but it is notable that "Death Comes for the Archbishop" (1926) is set in the primitive Southwest and that "Shadows on the Rock" (1931) is a study of seventeenth-century Quebec. Both proclaim the sterling worth of pioneers, but in these cases they are pioneers of the soul. Bishop Latour would have made a sympathetic spiritual father for Ántonia, Alexandra Bergson, and even Professor St. Peter; and the good Canadian apothecary would have cared for Neighbour Rosicky and comforted Old Mrs. Harris as he comforted Frontenac.

For Miss Cather is not interested in men and women because of their wrongs or their economic status, but because of what they are and what, inwardly speaking, they make of themselves. A preface to "The Song of the Lark," written seventeen years after the publication of the book (1915), remarks that

> the story set out to tell of an artist's awakening and struggle; her floundering escape from a smug, domestic, self-satisfied provincial world of utter ignorance. It should have been content to do that. . . . What I cared about, and still care about, was the girl's escape; the play of blind chance, the way in which commonplace occurrences fell together to liberate her from commonness. She seemed wholly at the mercy of accident; but to persons of her vitality and honesty, fortunate accidents will always happen.

Precisely. Miss Cather's fiction generally points the moral that to persons of vitality and honesty, fortunate accidents will always happen. That is why she can command pathos (as in the murder in "O Pioneers!"), but not tragedy, and why, when she gets into the metropolitan world which closes "The Song of the Lark," she fails to be convincing, because, where life is subtle and sophisticated, the fortunate accident cannot be pictured with simplicity.

Despite this absence of a tragic sense (perhaps because of it), one is continually reminded in reading her of Hawthorne, Emerson, and Longfellow. It is a comment upon the confusion into which the art of fiction has fallen that nine readers in ten are likely to regard this judgment as a confession of failure rather than of strength. It suggests an obsolete way of looking at life, it suggests an oversaintly sweetness, a morbid and sensitive withdrawal from the full, rough current of affairs. But the suggestion is not so meant. What I have in mind is that Miss

* *THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF WILLA CATHER. Autograph Edition. In Twelve Volumes. Vol. I, O Pioneers! Vol. II, The Song of the Lark; Vol. III, Alexander's Bridge; April Twilights; Vol. IV, My Antonia; Vol. V, One of Ours; Vol. VI, Youth and the Bright Medusa; Vol. VII, A Lost Lady; Vol. VIII, The Professor's House; Vol. IX, Death Comes for the Archbishop; Vol. X, Shadows on the Rock; Vol. XI, Lucy Gayheart; My Mortal Enemy; Vol. XII, Obscure Destinies; Literary Encounters. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.* 1938.

Next Week

THE BIG FOUR
By OSCAR LEWIS
Reviewed by William Allen White

I FOLLOW ST. PATRICK
By OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY
Reviewed by Ernest Boyd

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Cather renews a tradition which needs to be renewed—the tradition that the human personality is something given, like the cloud or the prairie, and not something to be laboriously assembled by the novelist as Frankenstein assembled his monster from the dissecting laboratory. Miss Cather has not withdrawn from life, she has merely lived it on another plane, the plane of the Golden Day. Her characters instinctively trust themselves as Hester Prynne and Miriam, yes, and as Evangeline and Miles Standish trust themselves. They have high authority for believing that every heart vibrates to that iron string, and therefore it is that fortunate accidents happen to them.

To say that in this admirable fiction life is highly personalized is to give a false impression of self-consciousness. What I rather mean is that for Miss Cather personal relations count more than all other relations whatsoever, and that her stories are planned, her style is managed to reveal these relations cumulatively. To use her own phrase, hers is the novel *démeublé*. "If the novel," she writes, "is a form of imaginative art, it cannot at the same time be a vivid and brilliant form of journalism." This parallels Hawthorne's distinction between the novel and the romance, and precisely as in "The Scarlet Letter" everything exists only as it enriches the story of Hester, so in "A Lost Lady" (1923) everything exists only as it enriches the story of Mrs. Forrester. The result is something timeless and not topical; and it is instructive to see how, when Miss Cather violates her own principle and touches upon topical things like the World War or the life of the opera, she sinks from the level of romance to the level of the novel—that is, from imaginative art to journalism.

Like Hawthorne she is most successful with the tale which can be thought of as a single curve of personalized experience. Her more pretentious books—"The Song of the Lark," "One of Ours," "The Professor's House"—break down as if they were not expertly plotted. But in truth they are not plotted at all. For Miss Cather, as for Hawthorne, plot is in this sense irrelevant. And books like "Death Comes for the Archbishop" or "Shadows on the Rock," though they seem ampler than "My Ántonia" or "A Lost Lady," succeed, not by violating the single curve principle, but by enriching it. They are not, like "The Song of the Lark," stuffed with artificial incident. It is true that it does not require 325 pages to tell us of Euclide Auclair and Cécile, but Miss Cather (again like Hawthorne, in "The House of Seven Gables") goes to unusual pains to create a harmonious setting for these excellent souls. The good apothecary does not perform one half the feats of Thea Kronborg, but his existence and that of his daughter are sufficient excuse for the volume because they are charming and noble hearts, who demand (and receive) the right landscape.

If the Catholic stories are only apparently separated from the rest of this work, the distinction between stories of artists and stories which deal with wise, rich, and simple natures like Ántonia and Neighbour Rosicky is likewise superficial. I do not mean merely that the career of Thea Kronborg begins like that of Alexandra Bergson, but that for Miss Cather the creative personality may equally express itself through music or through a calm acceptance of the natural environment and the shaping of human lives. Of Ántonia and Mrs. Harling, for whom she works, Miss Cather writes:

> There was a basic harmony between Ántonia and her mistress. They had strong, independent natures, both of them. They knew what they liked and were not always trying to imitate other people. They loved children and animals and music, and rough play and digging in the earth. They liked to prepare rich, hearty food and to see people eat it; to make up soft white beds and to see youngsters asleep in them. They ridiculed conceited people and were quick to help unfortunate ones. Deep

(*Continued on page* 16)

Jersey Eclogue

BY ROLFE HUMPHRIES

Daphnis
SOME small-leaved solitary light-green trees
Convey in summer still a look of spring.
Corydon
Light, clinging to the under side of leaves,
Hangs like a bronze or silver decoration.
Daphnis
A week before they ripen, oats are pale,
Pale green and jade, translucent as a wave.
Corydon
Oats, when they ripen, are a tawny color,
More rich and yellow than a stretch of sand.
Daphnis
I found a yellow spider on some tansy.
Corydon
And I, a tiny red one in the bee-balm.
Daphnis
Unseen, the cardinal whistles like a farmer
Calling his dog across an open pasture.
Corydon
The goldfinch, in his bounding flight, keeps chirping.
Daphnis
The Morse code of a woodpecker has no dashes.
Corydon
The hummingbird shows off before the female
Making a dozen U's before he's winded.
Daphnis
Cut sumach, drying, has an upland smell,
More so than sorrel, timothy, or clover.
Corydon
You mightn't think water had any odor;
Notice it next time, over the wet stones.
Daphnis
White cows turn lavender when slanting sunlight
Stains the brown area wherein they graze.
Corydon
Lavender cows turn white again when evening
Is far enough along, and the sun all gone.
Daphnis
The wind pours through the tree-tops, pauses, pours
Loud with autumnal omens. Hear, oh, hear!
Corydon
Rain sounds like wind, but when you listen for it,
Only the wind is all you ever hear.
Menalcas
Home to the city, boys, the bus is coming,
Ite domum, pueri—the company calls you home.

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Jacket design for "Voices in the Square."

Story of a Country Town

VOICES IN THE SQUARE. By George Abbe. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THE best news we can bring about a novel, above all a first novel, is that it is set squarely in the stream of American writing. "Voices in the Square" gives us that sense very sharply, of having literary forbears and carrying forward a literary tradition. Mr. Abbe has written of a town he calls Vernon, in Massachusetts, yet as we follow the life of this town its boundaries seem to reach out and envelop three others, and we are remembering Atchison, Winesburg, and Spoon River. The scene has changed, almost the century, but there are strands that move constantly through every decade of American life, from Ed Howe's Atchison to George Abbe's Vernon. The struggle of the youth against the town, the struggle of the town against beauty, of the minister against hypocrisy, of the town women against the town Woman, of blind, joyous life against the mores—these are the constants that will come to the surface any year in the American town, for the novelist who will dig for them. Mr. Abbe has used them to write a sound, stirring book.

That is the important news, which is not the same thing as saying that Mr. Abbe is today another Howe, or Anderson, or Masters. We can spare him that until he has pushed further along, although even now comparisons will not hurt him too much. The two Upton boys, at two different levels of youth, are given to us with a freshness that brings them entirely to life. They and the gang, the girls, the elders, the stores, the hills around the town, the dust in the square and the mists over the lake, all of it fuses to make Vernon known to us, and unforgettable. One character, Rena, seems a flaw, and the importance of her position in the story makes the flaw unreasonably large. Rena is the element of wanton beauty that disturbs Vernon. Her coming is like a gong in the opening pages; her passage through the book gives design to an otherwise scattered story. We expect the town to be uneasy about her, the men to pursue, the women to band against her, but we expect also that Mr. Abbe will stay clear of the pack. Instead, he seems himself to be uneasy and uncertain. This is the one character he does not understand, and she remains misty and unformed to the end. The design comes out all right, but it is forced and has no meaning.

The writing itself is eager and vigorous. Wherever the tradition of this tale springs from, the emotional intensity of it is the writer's own. The colors and smells in the woods, as well as the muscular feel of hurtling the bowls down the alley or Chuck's ecstatic discovery he can draw with charcoal sticks, are different exercises in the one capacity to write of experience freshly, at first hand. With that, and with its fine, realistic recreation of a diverse set of characters, this book carries more of portent in it than any recent first novel.

Lysistrata in 1942

THE IMPREGNABLE WOMEN. By Eric Linklater. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE STEVENS

THE story of Lysistrata is certainly well known to the kind of reader who is likely to pick up a novel by Eric Linklater; but Mr. Linklater retells it in such detail as to imply that he has dug up not one of the most perennially popular of all comedies but some forgotten legend. Aside from overwriting, however, he tells it on the whole very well, and with a great deal of the gusto familiar to readers of his "Magnus Merriman." He places the story in England of the 1940s, at the outbreak of the next war; his heroine is Lady Lysistrata, wife of Colonel Scrymgeour and intimate friend of Eliot Greene, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. She is the exact prototype of her Athenian namesake, and she has exactly the same bright idea for putting an end to war by organizing a "love-strike" (Mr. Linklater's phrase) among the wives, sweethearts, and camp-followers of the fighting men. The plot and even the characters are by Aristophanes; only the setting and the incidentals are by Linklater.

It is the setting and incidentals, then, which give the book its interest. The first incidental is the author's idea of the lineup for the next war: France finally becomes exasperated by the policies of a British government and suddenly sponsors an air-raid on London. Great Britain allies herself with Germany; the armies fight to a stalemate in Flanders, while all the cities of Europe are devastated from the air. The book alternates between stretches of dullness, where Mr. Linklater gives us long descriptions of battle scenes indistinguishable from countless memoirs of the last World War, and stretches of interest, when the air raids drive the seat of the British Government from London to Edinburgh. The best idea in the book is incidental: a spontaneous popular uprising in all countries against the air forces. Mr. Linklater makes the most of this episode before he goes on to the uprising of women, organized by Lady Lysistrata after the wounding and death of Eliot. This is Mr. Linklater's big climax, and he gives it all he has—if anything, a little too much.

For in spite of many good things in the book, there is too much of it. The characterization in major and minor roles is too conventional, the episodes are in general too easily foreseen; the argument throughout is intelligent but obvious; there is enough gusto to carry it, but the gusto runs away with it, turns it into an extravaganza instead of the satire it ought to be. "The Impregnable Women" is distinctly worth reading, but it might have been memorable.

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United Front or Trojan Horse?

WHAT ARE WE TO DO? By John Strachey. New York: Random House. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by PAUL H. DOUGLAS

MR. STRACHEY is the master of a powerful and persuasive style who argues that the experience of the last twenty years has demonstrated that the conservative socialists have been crucially wrong in believing the propertied groups would acquiesce in any ultimate democratic victory of the masses.

In the first place, he declares, capitalism is no longer expanding as it was prior to 1929, but is now distinctly contracting. It, therefore, cannot make the concessions which it once could, and instead has to depress wages in order to maintain profits. It is now counter-attacking by fostering fascism and quasi-fascism. Secondly, he argues that the workers cannot introduce fundamental reforms until they have really conquered power, since the propertied groups can always consciously or unconsciously engineer a slump if the laborites go too far. Such a threat, he points out, has commonly forced the moderates to give up their program of reform. Finally, he implies the British Fabians have been too greatly influenced by the peaceful and slow shifting of power in their country from the feudal aristocracy to the industrial capitalists. Strachey points out that this process amounted merely to one set of propertied classes admitting another to a partnership of power, but that both groups can be depended upon to resist to the bitter end any attempt of the propertyless workers to displace them.

John Strachey

In the face of such opposition, he contends, the British labor movement—under timid leadership—has steadily retreated. It gave up the general strike in 1926. It made no attempt at reform when it held political power from 1929 to 1931. It refused to solve the depression in favor of working-class measures, and its leaders instead went over to the Tories. It allowed itself to be deceived by the government about Abyssinia in 1935 and over Spain in 1936. It was weak in the latter instances because it could not bring itself to believe the Tories were being governed by class interests in refusing to check Mussolini and Hitler, and instead ascribed to them national virtues which the Tories did not in fact possess. Unless this policy is speedily reversed, the British movement, he warns, will be overwhelmed in the same manner as were the workers in Germany and Austria. Fascism will then conquer all of Europe. And fascism, he insists, is merely the political policy of capitalism in a period of decay.

Mr. Strachey's remedy is for a People's Front in both Great Britain and America which will defend "peace, democracy, and the national standard of life." Such a popular front should include the democratic elements of the middle class, as well as the workers, and should not exclude the communists, whom Strachey as a fellow-member naturally regards as the most disciplined and alert of all.

There is no doubt that the democracies and the workers do need to resist fascism far more vigorously than in the past. There are, nevertheless, several crucial points upon which Mr. Strachey's reasoning is either dubious or wrong. Thus, it is not yet certain whether the last nine years represent a permanent contraction of capitalism or merely a temporary dip in its ascending curve. Should the latter prove to be the case, much of the present strain would be reduced. Mr. Strachey distinctly errs when he identifies the maintenance of money wage rates with the protection of the workers' standard of life. On the contrary, when prices are falling, wage rates can be reduced and the standard of life can be maintained or enhanced.

Mr. Strachey, moreover, is disingenuous when he implies that the vicious attacks which the communists made prior to 1936 against socialist and working-class leaders were merely due to an individual excess of zeal. They were, on the contrary, dictated by the 1928 Congress of the Communist International, which declared Social Democracy to be the chief enemy of the working-class. Under this resolution, the communists tried to split the trade unions and refused to collaborate with working-class parties. It was in accordance with this policy that in the German Reichstag they joined the Nazis in voting against the Socialists and the Democratic center, and by forcing Hindenburg to rule by decrees, paved the way for Hitler. Strachey says nothing of all this, nor of the fact that the communists made a united front with the Nazis at the time of the Berlin transport strike. His glossing over of these vital errors may be the act of a "disciplined" communist, who defends the infallibility of his party, but it is certainly a gross perversion of history.

Finally, Mr. Strachey is silent upon a question which is in the mind of every sensible liberal and moderate when he is asked to admit the communists to a united front against fascism. This is, what would the communists then do if the fascists were defeated? Would they continue to treat the democrats and liberals as allies, or would they stage a further revolt to make their party the dictator, and shoot down their erstwhile associates as the Bolsheviks did the Left Social Revolutionaries in 1918? It is true that fascism is the most immediate and most dangerous enemy of democracy and of social reform. It is also theoretically possible that the communists may have learned something from their former disastrous tactics. But while true liberals are and should be resolute in their opposition to fascism, they can hardly be blamed if they look somewhat askance at the present loud protestations of friendship on the part of the communists. The latter will have to give far more evidence that their recent change of policy is basic and would not be quickly discarded should the fascists be defeated, before they can expect to be regarded as defenders of democracy. Until they do, the liberals and democrats are likely to reject all such alliances on the ground that it is a cheerless prospect for a man to be killed by communist missiles after he has resisted fascist bullets. Nor do the democrats and laborites want to fight off the Nazi secret police of Himmler only to fall a victim to the G.P.U. technique of Yezhoff and Yagoda.

Paul H. Douglas is professor of economics at the University of Chicago.

South of Hitler, in a Fold-Boat

THE DANUBE FLOWS THROUGH FASCISM. Nine Hundred Miles in a Fold-Boat. By William Van Til. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

IF you have ever wanted to paddle down the Danube in a fold-boat and never quite gotten around to it, here is the book for you. Before you have finished the first fifty pages, you will probably start shopping for a fold-boat and accessories. Or even if you have merely wanted to descend the Danube in a more conventional steamboat, you will enjoy making a vicarious journey in such pleasant company. Or if you are just looking for a sprightly tale to relieve the monotony of midsummer, you will find this chronicle of a holiday trip an excellent choice.

William Van Til and his wife spent last summer in following the beautiful un-blue Danube from its source in the Black Forest to the Iron Gates in Rumania, traveling 882 of its 1266 miles in their fold-boat, *Long Island Duck II.* Almost everything encountered during the long journey—rapids, bridges, castles, boaters and boat-clubs, mountains, rainstorms, and gnats—is described with a rare zest and gaiety. The route is illus-

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trated by sketch maps and photographs, the latter unfortunately often blurred.

There is more than just scenery in this travel book. Of the seven countries (including Austria) touched by the Danube, only Czechoslovakia could be listed as a democracy. An assistant professor of social studies at Ohio State University, the author is concerned with political trends and the opinion of the people regarding their rulers. He portrays quite effectively the sense of repression, fear, and uncertainty which hovers over the peasant and artisan. No American can fully realize the futility of modern nationalism until he has arrived at a European frontier. Having ourselves spent more than an hour one warm Sunday morning in signing the papers and paying the deposit needed to move a decrepit bicycle from Switzerland to France, we can sympathize with the Van Til annoyance as the Danube meanders from country to country, and from customs official to customs official.

Particularly delightful is the camaraderie of these fold-boaters of many nations, and the pleasure which they derive from this cheap and healthful sport. It is encouraging to note that we Americans are beginning to discover the joy and thrill of this popular European custom. Perhaps Mr. Van Til will write as entertaining a book on the Hudson or Mississippi, which offer their own brands of dictatorship and serfdom. If so, we shall be among the first to read it, for he has shown a large capacity for the intimate phrase, good humor, and shrewd observation of men and their institutions.

James Frederick Green is on the staff of the Foreign Policy Association.

"The Danube meanders from country to country, and from customs official to customs official" (From "The Danube Flows through Fascism.")

Inner and Outer Life

MORE LIVES THAN ONE. By Claude Bragdon. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM SLOANE

WHEN a man comes to set down the story of his life there are two major courses open to him. He may write about what he has done, or essay the more difficult task of describing what he has *been*. Claude Bragdon has chosen the second alternative, and feeling that every man lives more than one life simultaneously, he has separated his book into five sections, each dealing with some distinct element in his past. The result is an uneven but decidedly out-of-the-ordinary chronicle with a special and occasionally overstressed charm of its own.

In placing his emphasis upon the inner realities of his life, Mr. Bragdon does not forget the external facts of his career. Or careers, for he was successively an architect and a scene designer. (He built the New York Central railroad terminal at Rochester and also the sets for Walter Hampden's "Cyrano.") In addition, he found time to write a number of books and to experiment with light as an art medium. These activities are well described, and the vignettes of his childhood in upstate New York are limned with humor and charm.

The final fifth of his autobiography is entitled "My Occult Life," a section for which the reader has been somewhat prepared by the passages describing his earlier books, particularly "Delphic Woman" and "A Primer of Higher Space." Mr. Bragdon believes that the truth behind life is spiritual and metaphysical; he relates his whole experience to the intimations of the non-material which have come his way. As a theosophist, a believer in reincarnation, these intimations have not been rare.

Whatever you may think of this kind of thing, it has clearly given depth and richness to the author's life. At the same time it is responsible for the worst aspects of his book, a kind of moral sentimentality and a number of lapses from the clear, clean style of his writing.

On the other hand, the accounts of Louis Sullivan, Walter Hampden, Minnie Maddern Fiske, and the narration of the way in which Mr. Bragdon and Nicholas Bessaraboff came to translate Ouspensky's "Tertium Organum," are full of interest. They provide an unorthodox, sometimes absorbing book. Mr. Bragdon sounds like a man who has the courage to live his own life to the hilt.

Suffragette's Niece

EMILY. By Sally Benson. New York: Covici-Friede. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by KATHARINE SIMONDS

THE modern woman, when Mrs. Benson gets through with her, will be as dead as her aunt the Suffragette. The only reason not to wish this satirist instant success in her crusade is that life would be so much duller without it. Of course, her moral—that woman's place is in her place—is the oldest recorded, since it was for hearkening to the voice of his wife that the Lord cursed Adam.

If no revolution can succeed until it has penetrated the class against which it is aimed, then the revolution against the Modern Woman is well on its way to success. For Mrs. Benson, as befits a Mirabeau, has all the qualities of the woman's mind at its best. She is light of touch, neat without being thin, deft in construction, and quick to perceive pathos as well as absurdity. Her dialogue is so skillful that you can't resist the temptation of reading it aloud; her epigrams so satisfying that you catch yourself trying to work them into your own conversation.

She has the keenest possible eye for the small change in which women demand back the gold of their lives. She is not anti-feminist—most of her women are not bad at heart, but she knows just why they drive their men wild, and just when. In spite of her skill and wit, she preaches as stern a moral for the woman of her day as did Maria Edgeworth for her contemporaries.

She warns us that it's time to shut our traps and let our moral ascendancy well up again in the silence; she assures us that men, having, as things are arranged, few alternatives to us, are touchingly eager to forgive if not to forget.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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The New Monopoly

THE Nazi Primer, now being serially published in *Harper's Magazine*, is one of the most illuminating documents of our time. Like so much else in contemporary Germany, it is an imitation of a Russian device;—or, shall we say, like circumstances, which require the education of a people to accept and support a dictatorship, have inevitably led to like devices.

Yet the two primers are not entirely alike. The book by which millions of Russian children were to be given their conception of a fatherland, was really a study of a continent, what it contained, how it might be developed, what were the relationships among its waters, soils, minerals, farms, cities, and factories. This is what made it such interesting reading for Americans, who also own a continent. Only incidentally, so it seemed, was the lesson repeated and driven home, that a socialistic dictatorship was accomplishing miracles of exploitation and equitable distribution where capitalism had failed. You could skip or deny that argument if you pleased.

The Nazi Primer designed, so it is said, for seven million German children, is really different. Not a continent but a race—the noble German race—is its subject; not technologies and processes in which the Germans have long been expert, but social organization and how it may overcome the handicaps of poverty of resources and the threat of surrounding enemies until the German race attains the eminence which history shows that it has been predestined to reach.

As a result, this primer will seem to the American reader an ingenious piece of special pleading. He will note that in its clever but specious discussions of race mixture, America is never mentioned, for the obvious reason that if the authors' conclusions were sound, the American people would have long since slid into degeneracy and failure. And if he is historically minded, he will wonder at a survey which makes the Roman empire merely a brief and unfortunate incident in the civilizing career of the great German race.

And yet if he reads further, he will be rewarded by discovering something far more important than dubious race theories and twisted history. He will find a new political idea, upon which the Nazi state hopes to build a new civilization—the idea of leadership.

Leadership, naturally, is not new. The problem has always been how to develop and continue it. One of the causes assigned for the breakdown of the great Roman empire was the failure to devise a scheme by which adequate leadership could be continued without resort to violence. The Nazi state, with characteristic German thoroughness and characteristic German reliance upon discipline, has faced the problem squarely. It is a problem which must be solved if it is to maintain (as this primer makes clear it is intended to maintain) supremacy in Europe, in spite of the almost insuperable difficulties confronting a state not self-contained nor self-protected by natural circumstance. And they have solved it.

The primer leaves nothing to chance. A large but carefully selected group of the fittest is to be chosen from the nation, and these are to be trained to rule the rest. From this group, presumably the ultimate Führer and his associates are to be chosen. No economic privilege, no influence (theoretically), no pull, position, or previous condition of prestige, is to count for an instant in the choice of this group. Its selection will be at least as impartial as the entrance board examinations for American colleges.

Of the various tests which admit to membership, three are of decisive importance. In fact, it is clear that he who passes these three—if he is not stupid or congenitally illiterate,—may be sure of success, whether his father is a garage mechanic or a judge. First, he must be of pure blood—which means apparently of any German race,—and since by the ample theorizing of the racial experts who have contributed to this primer, most of Europe, except the southern Mediterranean rim, and the pure Slavs of the South and East are, or have been, or will be, German—some latitude may be expected here—provided there is no Jew, Arab, Chinese, or Negro, in the ancestral strain.

This determined, come the real tests —and these, except the requirement for enough intelligence to learn Nazi science, philosophy, and history, are two. There must be physical perfection, a perfect body to be trained by intensive exercise, feats of hardship and daring, Spartan heroics, until the physical man is capable of anything. Second, and this is underlined and repeated again and again, complete, unwavering, unquestioning obedience, an obedience which includes the acceptance without a shadow of reasoning for or against whatever may be the doctrine, the practice, the philosophy, and the version of truth, held at the moment by the Nazi state.

This is the Nazi idea for the creation of a new politics capable of handling the complex problems of an industrialized, militarized world.

One comment, and one only can be made here upon this program. There is much that is effective in it. There is one fatal, terrifying lack. No room is left for the imagination. No one in this school of leaders is to be allowed to exercise the imagination—how can they and fulfill the tests? Imagination is to be the monopoly of those who lead the leaders, and they, by definition, are to come from the schools which they themselves conduct. But are racial purity, physical fitness, and blind obedience a training for the imagination? It was said ages ago by a Jew, now despised in Germany, that without vision the people perish. This is a hard statement to confute, as every historian knows. For vision is what makes civilization, makes progress, saves great nations from descending into the pits from which archeologists, millenniums later, dig their bones.

There is, of course, one historical example of a nation trained by physical fitness and a blind obedience. The Spartans were heroic, they were unbeatable (for a while) in war, but all that is vital which remains of them is their history—which is probably a historical romance—and that was written by an Athenian. They had everything but imagination and it is more than probable that the heroic example of fortitude and courage which they have left to posterity is due not so much to their deeds as to the imagination of a better educated Greek who wished to sell the virtue of obedience to the free minds of his people, but by no means would have sacrificed their free minds to obedience.

Will the Nazis be more successful than the Spartans? It will depend, surely, upon who seizes the monopoly of imagination which they are so confidently preparing. Fortunately, as every American college graduate knows, the practice and the theory of an educational institution are seldom identical—and this may be true, even in Nazi Germany.

There is much that is true and effective in the Nazi Primer. The ideas, carefully elaborated, of equal opportunities for every talent will find no opponents among the democracies. The repeated assertion that all classes in society must be guaranteed decent living conditions is emphatic, if not very convincing if read in connection with the obvious purpose of the whole economy to put and keep Germany on a war footing. Nor can one deny the soundness of the argument that homogeneity of culture makes for a spirit in peace as well as war. The far more dubious economics of self-containment at any price, only the easily persuaded will read with praise.

H. S. C.

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Letters to the Editor: *Vermont's Idea of Library Service*

What Is "Library Service"?

SIR:—If there is to be any queue-jerking done with respect to Old Q.'s brash error in referring to Massachusetts and Delaware as "the only two states that provide public library service for their entire population," I should like to have a hand in the twitching, and not let Miss McLeod get all the exercise as she does in your issue of July 23rd.

First, let me say that words such as "public library service" mean little or nothing when a layman boils them down to exactness. Do you know exactly what a librarian means when he says that his library "has a circulation of 50,000 volumes"? When Miss McLeod, speaking for Maine, says that the Maine State Library offers a public library service to every resident in her state, it does not mean—pardon me, Miss McLeod—all that it seems to mean when a layman looks her statement over. A true public library service "for the entire population of a state" should mean a service that goes out and carries books to the people of a state rather than a service that requires people to "write in" for books—and a good many thousand never do, even in Maine (I have looked up the Maine statistics).

As a matter of fact, we have here in Vermont the first state-wide public library service in just what the phrase should mean and not in mere library jargon. . . . Ohio librarians might just as well keep quiet until I am through; a county library system cannot touch a state-wide system. . . . Consider, please. Vermont has its Vermont State Library, and any resident may "write in" for books. It has also its Free Public Library Commission with its library to which residents, native and summer, may "write in" for books or come in and find a highly competent staff ready to serve them; and the service covers about every request that the mind of man can conceive in relation to books and requests that have only a dim relation to the human mind. This combination of libraries is more than most states in the country have. But, in addition, beginning this month, the entire state will be covered by bookwagons, automobiles designed along original Vermont lines for carrying books. Each bookwagon is in charge of a trained librarian and will work a certain region from a central key library. Rural schools, villages with small libraries, are reached; in places where there are no libraries stations are established in stores, garages, homes; individual farm homes are served. The system has been in use for a year in two regions, and there is no question of its efficiency. The plan has never been tried in America before to the best of my knowledge, although the idea of a bookwagon working through an entire state is not new. The demand for books in the two regions mentioned has been five times the supply, and the problem of meeting the steadily increasing demand is a serious one.

"I've read six reviews of it and I don't know what to think."

With a system such as the one I have hastily outlined we come close to the true idea of a public library service for the entire population—closer in my opinion than we can come through the idea of a public library service which requires people to "write in" for books.

Vermont has put the whole scheme into service without asking a dime from any of the wealthy foundations anywhere. The whole plan was worked out by a librarian, Miss Dorothy Randolph, secretary of the Free Public Library Commission of the state, who was wise enough to leave Pennsylvania and come to an American state, Vermont. She has the gift of making the lingo of librarians clear to laymen of average intelligence, and they went to her aid in inducing the Vermont legislature to establish the system. As a matter of fact, the legislature saw the value of the plan without any inducing, and the system went through with only one dissenting vote. Governor George D. Aiken, it is needless for a Vermonter to say, was in favor of the plan.

Old Q. should know better than to trust bulletins sent out by librarians, college professors, and politicians. The only way for a layman to understand this library game is to corner a bright librarian and then painfully induce her to reduce her jargon to understandable terms. After a while he may begin to realize that the cause of libraries is one of the finest in our modern world to which he can give time and strength and such ability as he has; and the dividends that working in the interests of libraries brings cannot be estimated in the tiresome statistical stuff heaped upon us nowadays—the dividends are the unseen ones that go to make this a better world in a thousand quiet ways. When intelligent librarians and interested laymen really get together in America with the determination to make the library equal in meaning and power to any other of the basic American institutions, it will be a day of tremendous promise in American life. I hope devotedly that the day may come.

Up here among the Green Mountains we have made the start anyway with New Hampshire on the way and Maine and Massachusetts not even in sight.

I write as a biased witness, of course.

A. W. PEACH, *President.*

Better Library Movement of Vermont,
Franklin, Vt.

"Is Relief Here to Stay?"

SIR:—I had intended, if I were invited to make comments, to suggest that the *Review* should show more enthusiasm for books and articles of concrete value in helping to solve some of the critical problems now before the country, but Philip Kline's review in your June 25th issue has just about deprived me of any reason for such a plea. This article seems to me to be perfection itself in interpreting both books and the age in which we live, for cultivated readers. Writers and planners of books can profit as much as readers from a review which, like this, is both sympathetic and perspicacious. *Laissez faire* of our upper intelligent middle class is doing the country in, as I think you will agree, and I believe that all publica-

(*Continued on page* 20)

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Avenger in a Cape

THE WORLD IS MINE. By William Blake. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1938. $3.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

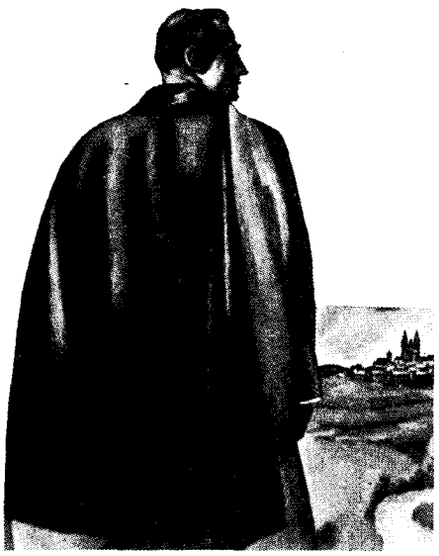
BYRON is dead but Byronism is still with us. Childe Harold and Manfred and Lara have proved tough customers—change their clothes and give them a few new properties and they will continue to do business at the same old stand. And now in this stupendous supercolossal spectacle, so kindly provided by Messrs. Simon and Schuster for the summer months, we've got 'em all rolled into one, with a few gaiours and Mazeppas thrown in for good measure. Meet Cristobal Hernando Salvador Pinzon, customers of the lending-libraries! He's richer than Monte Cristo, deeply philosophic as Manfred, redder than roast-beef medium, and cultured as Philo Vance.

The Avenger of Blood is with us again—the avenger in a cape. But that is all right, for Cristobal is really an anarchist at heart and devoted to the cause of the people. Dumas never thought of that one, and must be kicking himself now. But the great Alexander was chiefly interested in telling a story—Mr. Blake is interested in more—oh, very much more! I haven't been quite so peppered with the proper names of famous and secondary painters, musicians, economists, politicians, writers, booksellers, *etc., etc. since* George Jean Nathan, in the old days, used to discuss the Siamese Art Theatre in terms of the lesser dramas of Lope de Vega. Or read such a scathing indictment of the sins of Western civilization since Mr. Robert Briffault, in "Europa," had his baroness whipped in the cellars of a villa only a little larger than the Borough of the Bronx.

But, to get down to business. Cristobal is the son and heir of Don Francisco, alcalde of Huelva and owner of the huge smelting-works at La Fortuna. For a brief while, Don Fernando blooms as a capitalist. But three unscrupulous Englishmen and a Welshman diddle him out of La Fortuna—the Pinzon y Guzman clan is reduced to penury—Carmen, Cristobal's elder sister, dies tragically of consumption—and Cristobal starts in as a street-singer. But is he going to stay a street-singer? No, you're right.

At ten he is a master of church music—no kidding—and gets himself tattooed with a picture of Edmond Dantes in rags, on a rock. But this is only a starter. And reviews, if not books, have certain limits of space. To the adventures, the vengeance, and the final defeat of his new Monte Cristo, the author brings an apparently expert knowledge of international finance, a brush heavy with local color, three dictionaries full of vocabulary, and some of the most talkative minor characters yet conceived by man. They all talk at the drop of a hat and most of them talk alike, particularly the women. They sign themselves "not love but love's embodiment"—they discuss the problems of free love frankly and fearlessly—they know the underground political situation in six different countries. And through it all moves Cristobal, the boy-anarchist billionaire, remarking to a current mistress "I mean that our pretty playtime has charmed us both but means nothing for a man of my age, *à la longue*," and to himself "My battle song is in the last movement of the 'Eroica' symphony where the fists shake at God." Boy, page the late Lord Byron! And Ouida. And Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. Who said Lothair was dead?

Needless to say, Cristobal executes spectacular and appropriate vengeances on



From the Jacket Design for "The World Is Mine."

the men who swindled his father, though it takes him till page 446 to get around to it. In betweenwhiles, he has been imprisoned as an anarchist, fallen in love with and mourned Conchita Morales, the Red Virgin of Gerona, made millions for the Jesuits, and tried unsuccessfully to sell them the motion-picture industry for its propaganda purposes, made millions himself in the World War and after it, collected every possible variety of art treasure at a cost of a hundred million pounds, and lived with a dozen or so ladies, including a typical English gentlewoman right out of "The Green Hat." But even the vengeance is but dust and ashes in his mouth. He must really do something, now. He causes the stock-market panic of 1929, but that's only a bagatelle. Worth ten billion dollars in gold, but spiritually at a loss, he finally decides that what he needs, to carry out his vast plans, is a woman to stand by him. And does he find her? Are you telling me? Miranda D'Acosta is a simple blossom of the people who can fight four police-sergeants at a time without showing one trace of hysteria—and she is descended not merely from the oldest stock of Spanish Jewry but from a sect so extremely *rechérché* that it is practically extinct. She doesn't merely speak the purest Castilian, she speaks it like a Chinese sybarite reciting the Confucian lyrics of poppies and oleanders. In addition, she has tuberculosis. So naturally, she and Cristobal are married—Cristobal in "a modest morning suit." He doesn't even wear a leopard-skin vest.

The couple return to Spain and settle at Ronda. Cristobal is now the richest man in the world and his wealth is real wealth not paper. Now is his chance—he will use it all for the people and revolution. But, again, his curious dilatoriness overcomes him. He plans a people's revolution, imports arms, and suffers spectacularly for it. But, just as his plans are ripe, the Fascists get in first. The richest man in the world is cut off in the hill-city of Ronda, organizing the local Loyalist defense. As Franco's men ring him round and Ronda seems about to fall, the new Monte Cristo has one last grandiose idea. He must get back to his money, hidden in vaults all over the world. He will bribe the opposition for two million pesetas—a fleabite—save Ronda with the bribe, save himself, and then with his ten billion dollars, let fascism and capitalism beware! But it doesn't work. He puts the plan before the local council of war and they promptly decide that, in spite of his apparent services, he is really an enemy of the people at heart. They fling him from the local Tarpeian rock. On the way to execution, he sees the body of Miranda. She has fallen to an Insurgent bullet and her unborn child dies with her. There is nothing left but a pile of rent-receipts for safe-deposit boxes. Exit Monte Cristo.

If Mr. Blake had not larded his melodramatic story with quite so much portentous philosophizing—if he had been content to ride one horse or the other instead of driving a six-mule team at a gallop through handy guides to capitalism, culture, revolution, and the last forty-odd years of Spanish and European history—he might have produced a book that badly needs doing. For the story in his material is something not yet achieved by anybody who has tried his hand at it. And parts of the book hold. The end does, for all its preposterousness, the beginning does, the actual vengeances are well worked out. Moreover, Mr. Blake has a knowledge of the ways of the financial plunger that most novelists lack when they try to touch on finance. But even melodrama has to have its own proportions. It can't just bog down in quagmires of rhetoric. And Byron, when he put his shoulder to it, wrote greatly, not merely grandiosely. "The World Is Mine" is a gaudy phantasmagoria. But, even as phantasmagoria, it doesn't quite come off.

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*BOOK PREVIEW**

Getting the News in 1860

BY VALENTINE WILLIAMS

Baron de Reuter (From a cartoon in *Vanity Fair*).

UP to the middle of the nineteenth century few newspapers had foreign correspondents of their own. Foreign intelligence was culled from foreign newspapers as and when they arrived through the mails or from letters forwarded by banking correspondents abroad. The first telegraph line in Germany to be open to the public was that between Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) and Berlin and in 1849 Paul Julius Reuter, as he then was, was established at Aachen where he had set up an organization for collecting and transmitting telegraphic news. The enterprise and importance of the London Press and, especially, the development of telegraphic facilities in the British Isles soon drew his attention to England. He became a naturalized British subject and, when the first cable between Dover and Calais was laid in 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition, transferred his activities to London. There, on October 10th of that year, he opened at the Royal Exchange his first place of business in England, simply known as Reuter's Office. Such was the beginning of the great news agency which today covers the entire globe with its tentacles and the inauguration of the present world-wide practice of news syndication.

It was not until the year 1859 that "Reuter's Office" established itself definitely as a prompt and reliable newspurveyor by the first of a long series of historic "scoops." By the astute use of the Paris-London telegraph—at that time Paris was still the only point on the Continent in direct telegraphic communication with London—Reuter circulated the first report of the ominous words used by the Emperor Napoleon III to the Austrian Minister to France at the New Year's Day reception at the Tuileries, which foreshadowed the Italian campaign and the long fight for the union of Italy. The Emperor's remarks, which were tantamount to a declaration of war, set Europe by the ears and convulsed the Stock Exchange, and Reuter's reputation was made. Thereafter, no London newspaper could afford to dispense with the Reuter news and even Mr. Walter's *Times* capitulated and made an agreement with Mr. Reuter for a daily news service.

As news knows no clock, so Reuter's maintained a twenty-four-hour service, as, indeed, the agency does to this day. The night desk at that time was a solo turn and it fell to my father's lot, as the latest joined recruit, to fill it for months at a time. "You have no idea how hard we used to work," he used to tell me—a seven-day week and a twelve- or fourteen-hour day was the rule. He was still living with the family and, as there were no all night trams and no early morning tubes or buses, he had to tramp home through the dawn all the way from Finsbury Square to Camberwell. His route lay over London Bridge and I never cross that historic structure without a thought of that dark-haired young man, his brain buzzing with thoughts of Napoleon and Monsieur Thiers, Cavour, and Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel, Herr von Bismarck and the Chancellor Beust, Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, pausing at the parapet, as he told me he would often do, to doff his hat and let the early morning breezes from the Pool fan his brow.

In those days Mr. Reuter, married to a young lady from Berlin and father of three children, lived in Finsbury Square. The night office of the agency—at 5 King Street—was situated at the bottom of the garden, with a private way through from the house, a patriarchal arrangement which fills me, who have known the stern utilitarianism of modern Fleet Street, with a gentle melancholy. It was Mr. Reuter's habit to pop in at the night office at odd hours, to hear what news had come in but also, no doubt, to assure himself that the editor-in-charge was at the post of duty. On one fatal occasion, in the early stages of the American Civil War, my father, who was on the night-shift, had flung himself down on the camp-bed which the management had thoughtfully provided for the use of the edtior-in-charge between messages. He awoke from a deep slumber to see before him Mr. Reuter, in nightcap and Paisley dressing-gown over a long white night-shirt, shaking a dispatch at him. It was a message which the telegraph boy, failing to arouse the sleeper, had deposited upon his chest.

It was also the first intelligence of the Confederate victory at Bull Run!

"Ah, Mr. Williams," said Reuter in his gentle way, "the sleep of youth is so sweet, I cannot be angry with you!"

With their private aeroplanes and transatlantic telephone-calls and wireless pictures, modern editors are apt to be self-complacent about their enterprise. But such pioneers of journalism as Paul Julius Reuter, John Thaddeus Delane, and Gordon Bennett could still give them points. The outbreak of the American Civil War—the War between the States, they prefer to say below the Mason-Dixon Line—found the whole English-speaking world clamorous for news of events which were taking place across 3,000 miles of ocean. There was no cable—all news had to come, slowly and methodically, by mail. Crack Cunarders, like the *Arabia* and the *Canada*, took eleven days to cross the Atlantic: the

* *This week* The Saturday Review *presents an excerpt from Valentine Williams's forthcoming autobiography, "The World of Action." This section draws on the author's memoirs of his father, in the early days of Reuter's News Agency. "The World of Action" will be published in September by Houghton Mifflin.*

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U. S. mail packet *Fulton* four or five days longer.

Mr. Reuter never sat down under difficulties. Oriental blood in his veins there might be, but no "Imshallah" for him: his motto, like Foch's, was "Attack!" He could not bridge the ocean, but he could shorten the period news took to cross it.

His plan was to intercept the American mail steamer off the extreme tip of the S. W. coast of Ireland. The latest dispatches from the seat of war, enclosed in tin canisters, were put on board the mail-packet at the last possible moment at New York, and thrown overboard to swift vessels waiting off Crookhaven. If the packet passed at night, canisters burning a blue light were used, in case they fell in the sea, and exciting tales are related of the experiences of the Reuter cutters putting off in the teeth of a gale on their perilous mission. To expedite transmission of the dispatches to London Mr. Reuter had a special telegraph line constructed, over many miles of a wild, rough country which would otherwise have to be traversed by jaunting-car, from Crookhaven to Cork, where the dispatches were put on the wire to London. A similar arrangement was maintained at Southampton where *The Times* also met the American mail by boat and many exciting races for the telegraph office are said to have taken place between Mr. Reuter's boatmen and Mr. Delane's.

Mr. Reuter's enterprise was rewarded by a number of sensational "exclusives." The agency was first with the tidings of the release of the Confederate Commissioners, Messrs. Slidell and Mason, who had been seized on board the British steamer *Trent* by the Federal authorities and was able to give Lord Palmerston early intelligence of the adjustment of an incident which had brought Britain and the Federal Government to the verge of war. When Lincoln was shot by Booth at the Ford Theatre in Washington, Reuter's New York correspondent, by chartering a special boat, managed to overtake the mail-packet and fling a canister containing a full report of the tragedy on board. Thanks to his enterprise, the agency was a full week ahead with the news.

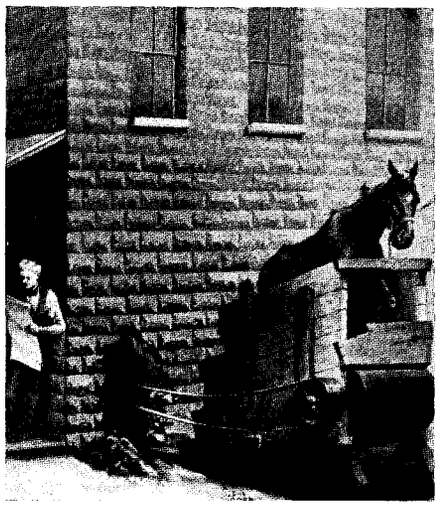
The conclusion of peace in the United States found Reuter's an established institution, and Reuter's telegrams daily occupied the place of honor in the columns devoted to telegraphic news in the English Press. The system was made as far-reaching as was practicable with the limited extent of communication then existing. Agents were appointed in all the important British colonies and the arrangements for the exchange of news with the other European news agencies improved and extended. In 1865 Mr. Reuter, wishing to provide more capital, converted his undertaking into a limited company, of which he remained the Managing-Director.

America's Second Act

35,000 DAYS IN TEXAS. A History of the Dallas News *and Its Forbears. By Sam Acheson. New York: The Macmillan Company.* 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by CHARLES W. FERGUSON

THIS book has in it the fragrant whiff of new-mown history. It is the biography of a great newspaper and, like all good biography, it covers dramatically the background and times of its subject. The *Dallas News* has been alive, man and boy, for almost a hundred years now and those years have been stirring ones. To set down history through the Argus eyes of a newspaper that has participated in every phase of it, cultural as well as economic and political, is in itself an ingenious device for giving freshness to events. Here it is an especially happy method in that the period



An old blind horse powered the press of the *News* in 1863 (From "35,000 Days in Texas")

covered and the journal covering it are both fascinating and important.

The story of Texas is a sort of second act to the drama of American history. What settlers did in New England and along the Atlantic seaboard they did all over again in Texas—and at a sufficiently later date so that the development of the story can be better understood. Texas was a definite theater of action, with events concentrated and issues focussed. It remained, long and vastly, an empire unto itself, and even after the formality of admission to the Union it continued a certain tacit independence gained from years of selfhood. A sense of separateness, which was manifest for years and still mildly persists, makes its history a singularly illuminating collateral of American history in general. This is particularly true since its industrial growth has kept pace with, if not actually outstripped, the development of other parts of the country.

Now the *News* has been part and party to the unfolding chronicle of Texas. It began, not in Dallas, but in the ramshackle village of Galveston, April 11, 1842, serving a town of 1,000 inhabitants, including slaves. It was the work of an itinerant, smudge-nosed printer named Samuel Bangs, who hove into Texas with a small hand press and an assortment of type. After a robust start, Bangs tired of his venture and leased the press and type to a couple of other fellows at $4 a month. One of these brought to the enterprise a man worthy of siring it, Willard Richardson, and it was he who first displayed the showmanlike vigor which, in one way or another, has been identified with the *News* ever since.

Richardson inaugurated himself with a pious and fiery defense of that most sacred of American institutions, African slavery. Eighty years later the *News* was to brand a parade of Ku Kluxers "a slander on Dallas" and throw itself with unending determination into a campaign against the hooded empire. Richardson's stand was as unpopular and impolitic in his day as the *News's* stand in the hysteria of 1921. In both cases, as in scores of others, the inner tradition of the *News* was kept inviolate, by the privilege of untrammeled expression that does not allow itself to be curbed by the lust for circulation.

In setting down the whole sweep of the paper's development, Mr. Acheson has done a difficult job well. His handling of the business expansion at the time the *News* established itself in Dallas in 1885, with surprisingly up-to-date news gathering and distributing facilities, is particularly good. For here, as elsewhere, "the story of the *News* is the story of Texas." Likewise he has caught and preserved in the book the intangibles that make the paper of more than sectional significance.

Fullest enjoyment of the book, of course, presupposes a bent for history and for journalism. Mr. Acheson has been under certain inescapable obligations as the historian of the *News,* and he has thus given space to incidents and personalities that are not as important to the general reader as one might wish. Telling adequately and accurately the story of the institution has made it necessary now and then to telescope into too brief space movements and events that deserve and would reward fuller treatment. But while his method of writing the history of both a country and a newspaper does not at all times reach perfection as far as popular appeal is concerned, the net effect of his work is superb and his book will stand as a document of importance in American social history.

Charles W. Ferguson, himself a Texan, is the author of "The Confusion of Tongues" and "Fifty Million Brothers."

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"Please Don't Disappoint Us"

BY LOUIS UNTERMEYER

Flash, Idaho.

Dear Mr. Untermeyer:

Our class in American literature is deeply interested in present-day writers, particularly in yourself. First-hand information from favorite authors will vitalize the subject and make us appreciate more fully the poems, short-stories, and etc. which we are studying.

You will pardon us if we seem to be intruding. We are deeply interested in you and are eager to learn just a wee bit more about you. Will you do us the great favor of answering the following questions? Please don't disappoint us.

1. *When did you first take an interest in writing?*
2. *To what (or whom) do you ascribe your first attempts in composition?*
3. *Is writing your chief delight?*
4. *Do you have any other hobbies?*
5. *Where do you write?*
6. *What hours do you prefer for writing?*
7. *Do you smoke while writing?*
8. *What are your working clothes?*
9. *Do you dictate?*
10. *Do you keep a note-book? For ideas? For phrases? For what?*
11. *After finishing a story how long do you wait before beginning another?*
12. *What are the people in your household forbidden to do while you are working?*
13. *Is your writing a seasonal occupation or do you indulge in it the year around?*
14. *What do you consider your best poem? Best prose work? Why?*
15. *Which do you prefer to write, poetry or prose?*
16. *Who is your favorite poet?*
17. *Who, next to yourself, would you name as the best writer of prose? Of short-stories?*
18. *What is your religious belief?*
19. *What message have you for a group of Juniors and Seniors who are studying your contribution to American Literature?*
20. *A final query: May we have the pleasure of receiving your photograph with your autograph?*

Respectfully yours,

FRANK EVERGOOD.

DEAR Mr. Evergood:

It is heartening to know that your class in American literature is deeply interested in present-day writers, particularly in me. This may not be the way of all the world; it may not even be the way of all Flash, Idaho; but it is, I hasten to assure you, the right way. There is just a possibility, of course, that your teacher has put you up to this. I have heard it whispered that there *are* teachers who give their students the impression that authors just sit around waiting to answer letters full of long and intimate queries. But I refuse to believe this. Only last week I had a letter from a senior in journalism saying he had "picked" me for the subject of an essay and would I please tell him more about myself than had appeared in print; "please," his letter ended, "don't be coy. We want the facts." And in the same mail as yours there was a letter from a girl who said it must be hard to write freely to a person you didn't know, so she described herself, birthmark and all, and concluded, "Now that you know what I am like, perhaps you'd write a poem about me that I could read to the class and publish in our school-paper." But, of course, no teacher could think up anything so cute; and, besides, teachers have so often complained of their lack of "private time" that they are (I would think) sure to protect the privacy of others.

So I assume that your inquiries spring from a spontaneous and immediate need. And since authors should be happy to furnish "a wee bit more" than is permitted in the coldly abbreviated paragraphs of "Who's Who," I will set an example to my colleagues in the craft. I will withhold nothing. Please don't be disappointed if I answer all your questions in full.

1. When did I first take an interest in writing? Not to quibble, it was at the age of ten. Of course I had been writing for years before this. But I first took an interest in writing after I submitted an essay to *Helpful Thoughts*. This essay of twenty-five paragraphs included two stanzas quoted from William Cullen Bryant, and the magazine, rejecting my surrounding prose, printed the verses with my name signed to them. This proved that it was easy for a poet to get published. That is how I became a poet.

2. See answer to 1. Or, to be redundant, to the editor of *Helpful Thoughts* and Mr. Bryant.

3. God forbid!

4. I have just one hobby; alliterative agrarianism. On my Adirondack acres I cultivate peas, potatoes, petunias, parsnips, paronomasias, purple pansies, pumpkins, platycodons, plums, pleonasms, poppies, and poetry.

5. *Where* do I write? Usually along the open road. I must have plenty of elbow room, wind in my hair, the kiss of the sun on my brow, a rainbow 'round my shoulder, a clean wind fanning my bronzed cheeks, a shine on my shoes, and a song in my heart. It is then that I am my true self. Inspiration comes tripping to meet me in, if I may repeat one of my own phrases, God's great out-of-doors.

6. The hour I prefer for writing is when the pale stars melt into the glimmer which heralds the beginning of another (and, I like to think, a better) day, the hour just before dawn. Unfortunately, at that hour, I am asleep.

7. I smoke continually while at work. I am a devotee of My Lady Nicotine (another of my happy phrases), and "the noxious weed" is never far from my lips. In youth I was addicted to the narghile. But at the age of fifteen my windpipe had become corroded. It seems I had forgotten to put in the tobacco, and for seven years I had been inhaling water. So I gave up the hookah. Now I smoke only marihuana.

8. When I go down to unearth, as I put it, some gem of purest ray serene, I wear a deep sea diving outfit with an air-conditioned streamline helmet for the dark unfathomed caves of the subconscious. But when I am working on an ordinary top-soil, run - of - the - mine thought, I invariably clothe myself in an extra heavy eight ounce denim Sanforized-shrunk double duty hickory striped high-back overalls. This allows for considerable expansion, if you know what I mean.

9. Curious you should ask me that. I used to dictate from morning to night—every husband is a born dictator—but I discovered that wives do not make the most docile secretaries, and there is a limit to the endurance of even a *paid* secretary. Besides, the strangest thing happened. All my secretaries insisted on putting down what I actually said instead of what I meant to say. This ruined my prose style. I resolved to reverse the process. Now my secretary dictates to me.

10. I *do* keep a note-book, a large one. But not for ideas or phrases. I use the note-book to keep the door from banging, to throw at the cats, to hold down the bills until they finally blow away, to twist spills, to make paper cut-outs, and a dozen other amusing indoor games.

11. I do not wait long between stories. Usually I wait only until the story I have finished comes back from the editor to whom I sent it.

12. Perhaps I should resent the implications in this question, for I am the very opposite of a temperamental tyrant. A stranger coming into my home while I am at work would be struck by the air of happy unconcern all over the place. The members of *my* household can do anything they like while I am writing—anything, that is, except whisper, walk about, point, peel onions, pray, open doors, close doors, wave at each other, open a newspaper, turn pages, yawn, lift their eyebrows, or make other significant and disconcerting gestures. Otherwise nothing disturbs me—absolutely nothing.

13. Writing with me is a strictly seasonal affair. I hibernate for at least nine months each year in a sound-proof manhole with my wife and one woodchuck. But I always emerge with a sharpened pencil on the first day of summer; by the Fourth of July my mind is spinning like a catherine-wheel; by August 1 I am aflame with the fires of creation. After that I burn rapidly; by September first I have reduced myself to ashes. There is then nothing for me to do but to sit fast

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on my Phoenix nest for another nine months.

14. My best poem is "Trees." My best prose is "Peter Rabbit." Why, indeed!

15. When I write poetry I would rather be writing prose; when I write prose I prefer poetry. It's the darndest thing.

16. My favorite poet? I'd rather not say.

17. Next to myself, I would name Frank Sullivan as the best writer of prose, especially when he writes under the name of William Saroyan. This goes for his short—all too short—stories.

18. Hard-shell Neo-Anglican ("Jump to Glory") Adventist.

19. A message? Not only for Juniors and Seniors, but for all those studying (or not studying) my work, I may say again as I have often said without fear of successful contradiction and with malice toward none: There is so much good in the best of us and so much bad in the worst of us that it scarcely behooves the least of us to do anything about the rest of us.

20. Aw, shucks. . . . Could you use a half-dozen?

Now tell me about yourself. For example, what clothes do *you* wear when you read my prose? My poetry? Other people's textbooks? Please don't disappoint me.

Anxiously yours,

LOUIS UNTERMEYER.

Elizabethtown, N. Y.

Great Judge and Liberal

CARDOZO AND FRONTIERS OF LEGAL THINKING, with Select Opinions. By Beryl Harold Levy. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by ZECHARIAH CHAFEE, JR.

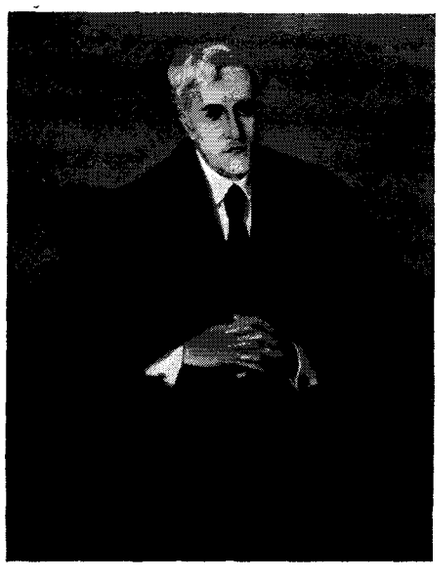
THIS is an admirable book. Every wideawake lawyer should read it, and thoughtful laymen can use it with pleasure as a more trustworthy explanation of the nature of legal problems than two other books which have recently had a wide popular circulation, Jerome Frank's "Law and the Modern Mind" and Thurman Arnold's "Symbols of Government." It shows that the judge's task is less simple and less sinister than these two "roaring realists" would have us believe. Dr. Levy is a member of the New York bar who knows philosophy as a graduate student and former teacher. Partly in the Justice's luminous phrases and partly in non-technical language of his own, the author has set himself to show what a good judge ought to do and how Cardozo did it.

A book about a single judge is apt to consist of quotation and laudation. Instead, Dr. Levy uses Cardozo as the center of a survey of contemporary ideas about law. He tests Cardozo's views by those of other writers, finds him occasionally wrong or inadequate, and supplements the Justice's conception of the judicial task by his own conclusions. This meaty essay of 117 pages is followed by twenty-two leading cases where Cardozo wrote the court's opinion, all reprinted in full except usually for dissenting opinions of other judges. Everybody prefers his own selection, but Dr. Levy has done well. Many of the business and matrimonial problems presented should interest laymen. Is a hospital liable to a patient, if the resident physician arranges an operation against her will? (One wonders whether the medical clinics now contemplated will also be let off.) What are the rights and duties of a wife after a civil marriage, when her husband breaks his promise of a subsequent religious ceremony?

Dr. Levy is particularly good on the limits upon judicial law-making and upon individualized handling of every case at the expense of legal equality; on the distinction between law and morals; and on the place of reasoning in the process of judicial decision. Especial praise is due the chapter on "The Judge as Artist." His art is threefold, constructing the opinion, reshaping the legal system, molding society. My own emphasis would differ at points. For instance, I should place a higher value on legal certainty, and dislike the slur on the ideal of "a government of laws, not men." The suggestion that all judges be psychoanalyzed requires one to trust analysts while distrusting judges; yet wouldn't it be fun to read the report on the love-life of some of our pet aversions!

Books about law for laymen are badly needed, but hard to write. Cardozo produced some masterpieces, and Dr. Levy in his turn has done much to avoid jargon and to state problems so their importance is clear to all. Occasionally, more concrete illustrations of legal principles would clinch his arguments. And when judicial opinions are reprinted, the layman will be aided by an introduction before each. True, Cardozo's opinions are unusually careful to tell what it's all about; but the reader would get much more from the case if he were first told briefly the previous state of legal doctrine and the precise problem raised, so that he could see just how Cardozo moved the law ahead.

Two personal questions deserve lengthier treatment. I should like to hear more about the Justice's literary style. Holmes and Cardozo were the real writers among judges of our day, but may their style be wisely imitated? Cardozo if more lush and less concise is also less cryptic. We know more of what he means. Probably no judge since Lord Bowen gives such positive pleasure to read. What pedestrian stuff most legal print is beside any random opinion of his in the New York Reports! That brings up the second question. Is the law the loser because Cardozo unwillingly left Albany for Washington? It seems significant that twenty-one out of the twenty-two opinions selected by Dr. Levy were in the state court. What he



Benjamin B. Cardozo—From a painting by the late Bernhard Gutmann.

wrote on the Supreme Court has not had the same impact on the bar and legal speculation as his creation of new doctrines of private law. And yet it is arguable that what men do is as important as what they say. If Cardozo had declined, a conservative Republican might have replaced him. Then the strain on the Court since 1933 would have been still more serious, and might have fatally weakened its influence. We were fortunate to have had on the Court in these trying days Cardozo, whom every lawyer acknowledged as a great judge. No wise supporter of the administration could denounce as old fogies the judges who overthrew the N.R.A. when Cardozo concurred. So perhaps it is well he changed, although he would have had more happiness otherwise.

It is hard to believe it is all over. No more essays on the work of a judge, such as no judge ever half-matched before. No more delight in the felicitous phrase that cleared up some obscurity that had long perplexed us. "In this summary of the judge," said Cardozo of another, "one must not be forgetful of the man, for indeed the two were of a piece." The warm, amiable friendliness was akin to his open mind. I never knew an able man so unassuming. As we think of him, let us remember that his greatness belongs to us because of our wise forefathers, who welcomed all races and creeds to enrich American life and thought.

Zechariah Chafee, Jr., is professor of law at Harvard University.

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The Novels of Willa Cather

(*Continued from page 4*)

down in each of them there was a kind of hearty joviality, a relish of life, not over-delicate, but very invigorating.

But the same thing is true in varying degree of Thea Kronborg, Mrs. Forrester, and Mr. Alexander, and, attenuated but still present, of Lucy Gayheart and Professor St. Peter. Again like Hawthorne, Miss Cather has been immensely concerned with the problem of the artist, but with her the problem is not one of transcendental longings, but of the proper channel for a rich and noble vitality.

Such personalities dominate environment, and are not dominated by it. One is not reading a local colorist. Although one remembers particular settings—the professor's queer study, Mr. Forrester's estate, the mesa which Tom Outland explores, old Quebec, the Shabata farm in "O Pioneers!"—the characters are not, as in mere regional fiction, emanations of a picturesque landscape. More important than particular stage sets is the total effect of space and sky, light and the changing seasons. When Miss Cather's people drift to a modern city, they become uninteresting. She labors to keep them alive, but they do not regain vitality until they return to their natural homes—a small town set in immense space, a farm bounded only by the horizon. She is not afraid of old-fashioned, formal landscape descriptions, but what one remembers is the way the characters seem to drink up light and air away from the metropolis.

In the brief but excellent essay, "The Novel Démeublé," to which one returns again and again for its good sense, Miss Cather distinguishes between the novel as amusement and the novel as art. Her complaint against the novel is that it has been over-furnished.

> The property-man has been so busy on its pages, the importance of material objects and their vivid presentation have been so stressed, that we take it for granted whoever can observe, and can write the English language, can write a novel.

"How wonderful it would be," she concludes,

> if we could throw all the furniture out of the window; and along with it, all the meaningless reiterations concerning physical sensations, all the tiresome old patterns, and leave the room as bare as the stage of a Greek theatre, or as that house into which the glory of Pentecost descended; leave the scene bare for the play of emotions, great and little—for the nursery tale, no less than tragedy, is killed by tasteless amplitude.

"Can one imagine anything more terrible," she drily asks, "than the story of 'Romeo and Juliet' rewritten in prose by D. H. Lawrence?" The question, which looks at first glance snobbish, is in fact a penetrating criticism of modern fiction.

Miss Cather has not normally choked her pages by tasteless amplitude, whether concerning material objects or physical sensations. But to create human drama out of humanity alone, to strip the stage, leaving only two trestles and four boards, three actors and a passion, requires, in addition to everything else, a style which shall provide the vitality for which other novelists substitute bustle and description. Miss Cather's style, grave, flexible, a little austere, wonderfully transparent, everywhere economical, is wonderfully apt for her purposes. There are certain things, to be sure, it cannot do. It cannot register wit or amusement or even humor, save rarely; it never rises to passionate indignation; it lacks earthiness, despite Miss Cather's profound belief in a normal relation with the earth. Dialogue, as she reports it, is seldom more than adequate. But within its boundaries it is beautiful writing, liquid to the ear, lucent to the eye.

She is unsurpassed in recording the natures of certain kinds of women, and competent with some men, but her women seem stronger than her men. She treats childhood gravely. The life of animals, curiously enough, has not greatly interested her. Violent action and excessive speech seem to her less revealing than solitude and reflection—indeed, it is surprising how much of their lives her characters pass alone. But she is, above all, a novelist who delights to contemplate and describe the mysterious processes by which a sympathetic personality develops or declines, and this she accomplishes with such intuitive insight that it is difficult to ascribe to her any method or theory of character. In the gallery of American novelists there are others of wider range, more epic dimensions, more immediate appeal. But there are few to whom the adjective "classic" can be more truly applied, for beneath the quick sympathy there is a Roman gravity, a sense of the dignity of life which contemporary fiction, aside from a mere handful of writers, has mainly lost.

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Travel by Freighter

VAGABOND VOYAGING. By Larry Nixon. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1938. $2.25.

THIS will prove an incomparably useful book to the numbers of travelers who are discovering the economy and comfort of freighter voyages. Mr. Nixon has compiled all the information that they are likely to need beginning with the most elementary for those who cannot tell a bumboat from a tramp, a freighter from a cargo vessel, and including specific data on rates, routes, clothes, food, and sea-going manners. One can travel for as little as four dollars a day, cross the Atlantic for thirty dollars, circumnavigate the world for $550, and be assured of a pleasant passage if he will trust—as he should—in Mr. Nixon's specific compendium. The cabins of freighters are all outside and usually equipped with real windows and beds. Officers and passengers commingle freely, and there are few taboos of trespass, but we have a feeling that Mr. Nixon will be roundly damned for his avowal that tourists practically own the freighter on which they travel; nor will these busy seamen leap to the roles of Social Director and Excursion Guide which the author wishes to assign them. His list of freighter lines, from Aberdeen & Commonwealth to Weinberger Banana, is comprehensive, with sailing schedules, prices, ports, and number of passengers carried on each boat, and his separate listings of trips according to their cost and the time required for them is equally thoughtful. His descriptions will likely send many stolid readers a-voyaging.

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Bootstrap Salvation

HOW TO GET THINGS DONE. By David Seabury and Alfred Uhler. New York: Julian Messner. 1938. $2.

Reviewed by LOVELL THOMPSON

SALVATION has not often been difficult to buy, and for those who do not want salvation de luxe it has not been expensive. The price of salvation is not so important anyhow as the identity of the man who sells it to you. For instance, salvation can be purchased—not very neatly packaged—from David Seabury for two dollars, for that is the price of his newest book agonizingly delivered from him by process of interview with Alfred Uhler, a disciple. Its title is "How to Get Things Done." Seabury's title is only half of his subject; the other and less publicized half is "How to Think You've Accomplished Something When You've Done All You Can." It is, in other words, a lesson in how to eat your slice of life and death and how to feel satisfied with it. He who has learned that lesson is certainly saved.

The price of salvation is not important but it is very interesting to find it being stocked by psychologists. When science struck down fundamentalism, it was clear to those who felt the blow that new hope must rise out of science itself. It is these people whom Seabury is after, and accordingly his receipt is one jigger of Freud and two jiggers of Mary Baker Eddy in a bucket of water, absorb liberally to cure the heebie-jeebies.

Consider these few sentences from "How to Get Things Done." "Promptness isn't a virtue, it's an art." The fissures in the personalities of those who are chronically late have been plumbed by the Freudian school which does not believe that setting your watch ten minutes ahead is a cure. "Man can accomplish little . . . if he is mentally sick. Hysterical upsets . . . destroy his mental calm. . . . His glands become unbalanced. Every breeze that blows brings sickness—." That seems like good sense and fair Freud but it's swell Eddy. "Once over the stumbling block of pride a man can realize his abilities are a gift for which he deserves no credit." There's the fatalistic precipice that psychoanalysis walks along; here's Seabury's answer, none too firm, "I believe there is some reason for my existence, I believe that I am going to be able to find my duty to life, I know that if I go forward with this attitude, it will somehow open and let me in." And so the pearly gates will somehow open? Well then, we have not been cheated of our two dollars.

Karl Menninger's "Human Mind" is certainly one of the better popular briefs on psychology. Books like Dale Carnegie's and this of Seabury's are healthy enough, though misbegotten offspring of such honest work as Menninger's. They attempt a little illogically to put psychology on a paying basis—not only for the man in the street but even for the man in the manhole. Still, all of us have to have something to go to sleep with, whether a Teddy bear, or a bottle of gin, or a crucifix, and I am not sure that falling asleep in a bath of Seabury's elixir is not as good a way to find the sleep of the just as any.

Freud and Eddy with water may be the health drink of the millennium.

Indian Diary

INSIDE INDIA. By Halidé Edib. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. $3.50.

SINCE the Round Table Conference of 1931, when the rulers of the British Empire were confronted in London by the incongruous figure of Mahatma Gandhi, the American public has heard regrettably little of India. The experiments in provincial self-government under the new constitution, the emergence of socialist leadership in the Congress party, and Gandhi's efforts for education and social reform among the peasants have all been eclipsed in our newspapers by more pressing problems of domestic and foreign affairs. An account of contemporary India is therefore welcome at this time, especially when written by a distinguished educator and publicist. Halidé Edib, pioneer advocate of women's rights in Turkey, devotes most of her attention in this book to social, educational, and religious questions. As India's religious conflicts are usually discussed by Hindus or Christians, the Moslem approach of Mrs. Edib raises many interesting issues. Having traveled widely in Europe and America, she is able to make sagacious and often witty comparisons between East and West.

"Inside India" is a travel diary and informal collection of impressions rather than a scholarly survey of current problems. Mrs. Edib tells of her lecture tour in 1935 through the northern and central provinces, digressing on every other page to comment upon some aspect of Indian life. She provides an intimate picture of Gandhi at work in his peasant community, and delineates outstanding citizens. She describes the beauty of the Taj Mahal by moonlight and of ceremonial poetry-reading at Hyderabad, as well as the utter degradation of nine-tenths of the population and the filth of village and slum.

While one must look elsewhere for detailed consideration of India's problems and for commentary upon present and future development under the new constitution, Mrs. Edib provides a set of personal impressions which are useful in interpreting such a complex society. She states many issues and transmits many points of view, but attempts no solutions. Her intelligence and character, as well as literary skill, are evident on every page.

The AMEN CORNER

Cardozo and Frontiers of Legal Thinking, by B. H. Levy,[1] which has just been published by the Oxford University Press,[2] is a timely evaluation of Justice Cardozo's great contribution to practical jurisprudence. His humane and realistic approach to problems generally treated legalistically would make the book of interest to every citizen, if the Judiciary issue had not already stirred up our interest in questions like this.

Mr. Levy shows "the vast amount of law which is made by judges in the higher courts." The first part of the book is an account of Cardozo's career and his philosophy of law in practice. The second part illustrates this with a selection of Cardozo's opinions.

Professor Felix Frankfurter wrote the Oxonian that this book "takes ideas that are familiar and accepted by the most alert minds familiar with legal problems and conveys them with integrity, perspective and persuasiveness. Cardozo is undoubtedly one of the half-dozen most powerful generators of juristic thought. And it is important, therefore, to make his contributions available in a format at once illuminating and critical."

Another book of current interest is *Housing Comes of Age,* by Michael W. Straus and Talbot Wegg,[3] who have actively participated in the development of the Government's housing programme since its inception, Mr. Wegg as architect connected with the initiation of projects, and Mr. Straus as Director of Information in the PWA. The book is thus an accurate inside story, written with access to the papers and files of the Federal Government, of America's first public slum clearance and low-rent housing programme.

Up to now "One Third of a Nation," etc.

Which reminds us that the Oxford Press also published the first impartial study of a major New Deal experiment, *Bread and Circuses,* A Study of the Federal Theatre, by Willson Whitman,[4] which, as Lewis Gannett said in the *New York Herald Tribune,* "so eagerly describes one of the most exciting developments of our exciting age." Miss Whitman, who has never been connected with the WPA, writes as an outside observer, but above all she writes so interestingly that you cannot put the book down.

The Oxford University Press has been going on so long (since 1468) that it is often forgotten that they have always been, and continue to be, pioneers. So just to enforce the point we should like to point out that they are publishing, surprising as it seems, the first history of city government in the United States ever written. *History of American City Government. The Colonial Period,* by Ernest S. Griffith[5] has just appeared. Later periods will be the subjects of future books.

In the meantime a fascinating book about a later period of American history in general is *Tocqueville and Beaumont in America,* by G. W. Pierson,[6] "reconstructed from a few published writings of Alexis de Tocqueville, and from a mass of newly discovered letters, diaries, sketches, and other unpublished manuscripts." From the experiences described emerged a book which men as far apart as Mussolini and Professor Harold Laski have called the most outstanding liberal book of the 19th century, Tocqueville's *De la Démocratie en Amérique.*

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The Middle Ages

THE MEDIEVAL WORLD. By Loren Carey MacKinney. (Vol. II of The Civilization of the Western World). New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1938. $3.75.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

PROFESSOR MACKINNEY'S volume follows one on the ancient world by Professor Wallace Caldwell, and will in turn be followed by one on the modern world by Professor Alice F. Tyler, to complete another college textbook series on the history of the Western society to which we belong. To judge from the present volume, the series will be well suited to fit the needs of a modern and very competitive market. Professor MacKinney, as his excellent bibliographies show, is thoroughly familiar with the work of modern scholarship in the field of medieval history, perhaps the field in which recent work has most considerably altered views current a generation ago. He is an orthodox "new historian," willing and able to delve into matters the older historian would have neglected. There are good chapters on town and village life, on commerce and industry, on literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, letters and music, on philosophy and religion. The student will learn about merchet, the gradual, the Patarines, nominalism; he will even discover why tenors are called tenors. Professor MacKinney does not neglect the traditional political and military history, but ties his book together with firm threads of narrative. There are plenty of clear and apt illustrations, many of them from medieval manuscripts and drawings.

The book follows the modern trend in emphasizing the view that the Middle Ages did not make a cataclysmic break with the past, and that even the so-called Dark Ages were by no means the relapse into complete barbarism they seemed to be to the enlightened ages which followed the Renaissance, and which gave them this derogatory name. Indeed, Professor MacKinney refuses to use the term Dark Ages at all, but writes of the Early Middle Ages, 400-1000, and the Late Middle Ages, 1000-1500. He regards this later period as one of the great flowerings of our society, one of great civilizations Western men have produced. He does, however, give ample attention to those seeds of our own culture today which are so evident even as far back as 1000, notably in economic life. He is clearly not a Catholic, or he could hardly have written of the clergy as "a sort of transmission line by which the mysterious current of salvation was transmitted to the Christian believer." But he is no anti-clerical in the dogmatic sense, and his work is not marred by that contempt for historic Christianity evident in several current American textbooks of medieval history. He writes good clear prose, without any attempt at sparkle or subtlety, or indeed at stylistic distinction of any kind. But he says what he means to say, and he will give the plodding freshman no unnecessary trouble.

This reviewer, who has had to go over a number of books of this sort in recent years, finds it difficult to convey the general impression made on him by Professor MacKinney's book and by most of the others without apparently giving them less than due praise. But they do seem mostly standard goods, of excellent quality and very useful. We have got with our textbooks in history, as we have with cigarettes and low-priced automobiles, to the point where the consumer can hardly go wrong, where he will get a satisfactory article no matter on what grounds he makes his choice between rival brands. This will seem to the romanticist a sad state of affairs. But it is surely good enough that in books like Professor MacKinney's the student has good nourishing bread put before him.

Crane Brinton is in the history department of Harvard University.

"It's a humdinger!"
THE Wall
A MYSTERY BY Mary Roberts Rinehart

Czech Conflicts

CZECHS AND GERMANS. By Elizabeth Wiskemann. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $5.

Reviewed by HENRY C. WOLFE

NOWHERE, probably, are ethnic and political problems more complex than in the land-locked Republic of Czechoslovakia. Here in the heart of Central Europe one finds ancient racial animosities inextricably entangled with contemporary political and social ideologies. Here the age-old rivalry between Teuton and Slav is complicated and intensified by the Nazi drive for world power and the stubborn Czech resolve to remain independent.

Centuries before the battle of White Mountain (1620) Slavs and Germans were struggling for the mastery of Bohemia. "In the last ninety years," Miss Wiskemann tells us, "the circumstances have obviously changed, but the problem has remained the same one." It is a problem which was a factor in the wars of religion, plagued the Dual Monarchy, and finally assumed major importance in destroying the Empire of the Hapsburgs. To critics of Czechoslovakia, the Republic has essentially the same ethnic weaknesses as the Empire which came ingloriously to an end in 1918.

When the Czechs and Slovaks founded the new state the Sudeten Germans did not collaborate. In a footnote Miss Wiskemann points out that at the Peace Conference "in answer to a question from Mr. Lloyd George," Dr. Benes "admitted that

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
COFFINS FOR THREE *Frederick C. Davis* (Crime Club: $2.)	Cy Hatch, sociology-teaching detective, solves, by heterodox methods, two shootings and a strangulation.	Gunplay in a night club, wild chase after elusive gal, tangled plot involving carrier pigeons, peppery talk, and gory end.	Extra good
THE HUNTED MAN *Walter S. Masterman* (Dutton: $2.)	Supt. Sinclair saves bacon of lad hounded by desprit gang and unravels mystery of unclothed cadaver.	Fantastic yarn with unusual opening, hairbreadth escapes by land and sea, and sleuthing of little moment.	Thriller
ROPE ENOUGH *John Stephen Strange* (Crime Club: $2.)	Political intrigue that leads to murder, kidnapping, and other skulduggery keeps Barney Gantt, photographer-detective, on hop.	Campaign killings not especially impressive, but characters veraciously drawn, Gantt's deducing logical, and tale engagingly tough.	Passable
NIGHT OF CRIME *Armstrong Livingston* (Sovereign House: $2.)	Corpses litter Long Island estate. Jimmy Traynor locates mass murderer whilst lighthearted revelers make merry.	Solution fractures rules of game and story as whole wavers between nonsense and lurid melodrama.	Mediocre
MURDER IN NEWPORT *Gerard B. Lambert* (Scribners: $2.)	Ex Secret Service man solves poisoning of wealthy, self-made yachtsman among Bailey's Beach socialites.	Liability of heavy Holmes and wearisome Watson overbalance asset of ingenious murder method.	Stodgy

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the Sudeten Germans would vote against inclusion in the Czechoslovak state." Many of these Teutons were actively hostile to the new government and expected its early fall. On the other hand, "in a thousand little ways the Czechs, in the early days of their Republic, set out to humiliate the Germans." Moreover, "the grievances of the Hungarian minority were real." In this manner were the ancient racial feuds of this region carried down to the appearance of Hitler.

Once the swastika had triumphed in the Reich, a new era of German-Czech relations began. No longer was the Bohemian problem confined to indigenous Teutons and Slavs. Herr Hitler transformed it into a European problem, a destructive quarrel that has constantly threatened world peace since 1933. That Czechoslovakia has critical days ahead seems about the only certainty in a confusing and paradoxical situation.

Miss Wiskemann guides the reader through the maze of racial conflicts and political strife that underlie the present Berlin-Prague crisis. Her approach is objective and she assumes that her readers have some knowledge of Central European affairs. The volume is well documented and indexed. But the factual style of the book will probably limit its popular appeal. It seems more likely to be used as a reference source.

The Octopus

REBIRTH OF MONOPOLY. By William J. Kemnitzer. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by W. O. Scroggs

THIS book is concerned only with one sort of monopoly—that in the petroleum industry. The author knows a vast deal more about the oil business, and he is convinced that it is about to develop into a much more formidable trust than that which the Supreme Court ordered dissolved in the famous Standard Oil case in 1911. Indeed, this new octopus, in the author's opinion, may even jeopardize our whole democratic system of government.

The germ of this new growth Mr. Kemnitzer finds in the new conservation programs of the state and federal governments. The big oil companies, he says, under the pretext of conserving a vitally important resource, are curtailing output, squeezing out the independent producers and distributors, and controlling prices. Of course there are laws to prevent all this, and the government has just launched a new monopoly investigation to ascertain whether these laws are adequate. But Mr. Kemnitzer has an anti-conservation complex, and would abolish state and federal conservation measures in order to thwart the monopoly. He scoffs at the geologists who tell us that our oil resources will be exhausted within ten or fifteen years and insists that "at present and anticipated rates of consumption this supply is sufficient for at least five hundred years." So away with controls, and on with the drilling. Let joy-riding be unconfined. And then the oil monopolists, presumably, will fold their tents like the Arabs and as silently steal away.

W. O. Scroggs is a writer on economic and historical affairs.

Strong Stories of the Dispossessed

THE WAY THINGS ARE. By Albert Maltz. New York: International Publishers. 1938. $2.00.

OF the eight stories collected here at least five are memorable. With rereading they bite deeper, they thrust harder at the social conscience, and at the same time rereading confirms the presence of a disciplined literary talent. In other words, Albert Maltz happens to be a proletarian writer who is also a good deal of an artist, and the two are mingled in his work. They do not appear separately in two kinds of story but are the components of a single fervor that makes these stories rich and exciting and integrated. Maltz wants frankly to hurt us, into knowing the hurt of the dispossessed, the vagrant, the unemployed, the industrially crippled, the depression victims. He wants us to feel, furiously. "Incident on a Street Corner," a fragmentary sketch, is composed entirely of feeling; not the brief incident matters, involving two cops and a stubborn drunk, but the tension that gathers over the watching crowd, electric and portentous, and the few words they speak. The eight pages hold a torrent of fury just below the brim, this side of overflowing. But in "Man on a Road" a greater restraint has been achieved, for the story is told in a steady, brooding, almost relaxed tone. Quietly the tale is laid before us of a construction worker doomed by silicosis, who has left his family so that he may die alone and be no burden. In its fine, tragic statement and in the pity and horror it reflects upon the reader, this is probably the best thing in the book. With these should be classed "The Game," a short sketch that appeared in *Scribner's*. It is a skillful demonstration of how potent and responsive a tool is the stripped dialogue developed by Hemingway.

These three display variety within the limits of restraint, and contain Maltz's best writing. In the others the stops are pulled out to varying degrees and we see the author really laying about him. "Season of Celebration" was included in the recent anthology of novelettes, "The Flying Yorkshireman." Read again, it reveals even more clearly its essentially dramatic structure. It is a succession of scenes in a downtown flophouse, building up, by all sorts of theatrical devices, entrances and exits, black-outs, groupings, changes of pace, racy characterizations, to a strong climax. It lacks only stage business to make a play of it, yet it is brilliantly carried off and we must marvel again at the flexibility of the modern short story, which embraces everything that can be done effectively with words. "The Way Things Are" and "The Drop-Forge Man" are of still another type, characterized by a grisly humor. In the first, for example, a larger-than-life, fantastically animated portrait of a Southern sheriff crowds the foreground, and through him is sifted the story of a Negro goaded to suicide. This oblique, macabre focussing adds a point this kind of story never had before; the touch is light, the effect powerful. There are two other stories less successful, chiefly because they seem still to be in the idea stage, raw material not worked over. The whole volume is impressive for its variety of attack, for the sure way in which its writer handles a number of techniques, shifting his ground, changing his style to suit the story. It ought to set a new tone for proletarian writing.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 227)

THOMAS HOBBES: "THE LEVIATHAN."

For the laws of nature as justice, equity, modesty, mercy . . . of themselves, without the terror of some power to cause them to be observed, are contrary to our natural passions that carry us to partiality, pride, revenge and the like.

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—ELMER DAVIS, in The Saturday Review

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The Problem of the European Jews

PEOPLE AT BAY: The Jewish Problem in East-Central Europe. By Oscar I. Janowsky. New York: Oxford University Press. 1938. $1.75.

THE recent efforts of the German government to confiscate Jewish property give an unhappy timeliness to this excellent little book. Persecution of the Jews is proceeding throughout central and eastern Europe in less spectacular fashion but with quite as far-reaching results. Professor Janowsky, at the behest of the Conference on Jewish Relations, has carefully surveyed the whole question of anti-semitism in this area, paying particular attention to Poland and Rumania. His temperate analysis of basic causes and possible remedies, based upon both scholarship and travel, contributes greatly to our knowledge of a complex and tragic problem.

Several different factors have combined to reduce the Jew to penury and despair. Religious and ethnic antagonisms of past centuries are intensified by the economic nationalism of today. In each of the twelve states of east-central Europe governments have sought to unify the national economy and prepare for self-sufficiency in case of war. Being middlemen—in finance, commerce, and communications—the Jews became victims of every attempt at industrialization and unification. The widespread development of consumers' coöperatives, for example, has been particularly disastrous for Jewish traders. Being in the professions—law, medicine, and civil service—the Jews were pushed out whenever others with more political influence sought their posts. It is significant that this policy of gradual elimination, or "cold pogrom," has been accelerated everywhere by the anti-semitic activities of the Hitler regime, for "the peoples of east-central Europe have long viewed the German Reich as one of the great leaders of European civilization."

In considering the various solutions proposed for the Jewish problem, Professor Janowsky shows admirable intelligence and restraint. He frankly admits that "for the time being, a genuine solution of the Jewish problem does not appear to be a practical possibility." Neither the belief of the extreme orthodox in Messianic redemption nor the demand of radicals for a classless society seems realizable in the near future. Assimilation of the Jew on a basis of equality, once regarded as the only hope for this region, has been made impossible by economic nationalism. Only "palliatives and partial solutions," admittedly unsatisfactory, can be employed at the moment. Jewish youth should be given technical training for new occupations, especially for agriculture, in preparation for either emigration or land reform. Development of Palestine as a national homeland, while limited in opportunities, should be furthered. The author concludes with a plea for Jewish coöperation within these countries and for continued Jewish assistance elsewhere. A united Jewish representation could bring pressure to bear upon the more oppressive governments by compelling them to recognize the benefits which they are receiving from international assistance to the Jews.

Letters to the Editor

(*Continued from page* 9)

tions appealing to this class should arouse themselves from a *laissez-faire* attitude. I don't ask that you turn the *Review* into a political sheet; you know that; I plead for more awareness in all our reviews of what is going on in the country, and I urge this function upon authors, as citizens.

How many books appearing today never touch upon the things which absorb thinking people nine-tenths of the time! Those who answer this plea by arguing that art is not propaganda tie themselves into knots of inconsistency. *The Saturday Review* recently has done its bit, and I believe it will continue.

THOMAS H. UZZELL.

New York City.

"The Valley of Fear"

SIR:—I wonder if any of the Baker Street Irregulars have chanced upon Allen Pinkerton's true story entitled "James McParlan and the 'Mollie Maguires'"?

After experiencing a vague feeling that I had read the story before, I realized, with growing excitement, that as far as plot, characters, locale, and even minute details, were concerned the two stories, Pinkerton's and "The Scourers," which constitutes Part II of "The Valley of Fear," were identical. Surely this account of the lawless gang of the Pennsylvania coal mining regions must have been the source of Conan Doyle's story. Though identical twins as to physical features, the spiritual resemblance of the two stories is not marked. As well compare the originals of Shakespeare's plots with the finished plays themselves! For although Allen Pinkerton's account achieves a kind of special interest from the mere fact that it is a true one, alas, it lacks the magic presence of a Sherlock Holmes.

MARY SHORE CAMERON.

Chapel Hill, N. C.

Smiling Through the Soviet Union

LAUGHING ODYSSEY. By Eileen Bigland. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1938. $2.50.

Reviewed by EUGENE LYONS

MRS. BIGLAND, an Englishwoman in her middle years (she admits), is the perfect lady tourist: with a positive relish for picturesque discomfort, a windy gusto for minor adventures and casual acquaintances, an angelic innocence in all matters economic and political. One summer she lavished these talents on Stalin's empire, and the result is this "Laughing Odyssey." Those to whom the Soviet land is no laughing matter may be annoyed by this book, and those who are somewhat informed about affairs in that country may laugh in the wrong places. But the lucky mortals to whom fun is fun, even in a cemetery, should find the volume exhilarating. Mrs. Bigland, the publisher's blurb informs us, "went to Russia with the intention of enjoying herself—and she did." Tastes in amusement differ, and possibly others may not find the lady's hilarity quite as macabre as this reviewer.

She skims and bounces and bubbles over the surface of Russia, from Negoreloye and Moscow to the Black Sea, absorbing misinformation and spraying the sunshine of her ebullient nature with an enthusiasm sometimes coy, sometimes ludicrous, and mostly sentimental. The spongelike absorption, uncritically, of whatever she hears is one of the principal aids to risibility in the laughing journey. From a Soviet writer of "brilliant intellect" she learns that Stalin is "virtually the leader of the Communist Party." A statue of that virtual leader convinces her of "the man's colossal strength, both physical and mental." A doctor explains to her the difficulties of foisting compulsory motherhood upon these backward Russian women. "Our trouble," he says, "is that with a population of such enormous size it is impossible to make everybody understand that abortion is no longer allowed." Watching the worshipful visitors to Lenin's mausoleum on Red Square, Mrs. Bigland, who ventures to speak for Mr. Karl Marx, finds "that it is a far better thing for the Soviet Union to bow to Lenin than to stop bowing altogether." And she stops bowing long enough for a profound political commentary: Strange, she wonders, that some Trotskyist hasn't bombed the mummified remains of Lenin, and by destroying the symbol thus destroy the whole regime.

Having cleared up the mystery of counter-revolutionary peasants and livestock too weak to live without food and fodder, Mrs. Bigland goes on to enjoy herself in other places and topics. And why not? "Even at the best of times," she explains, "my brain is non-political." Moreover, "men and women with far more knowledge of world affairs than I have, tell me my ideas about Russia are all wrong." Far be it from this reviewer to dissent. Despite her non-political mind—indeed, because of it—she had one grand time, and readers with non-political minds will share it in her "Laughing Odyssey."

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The New Books

Belles Lettres

ESSAYS IN AUSTRALIAN FICTION. By M. Barnard Eldershaw. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. 1938.

"M. Barnard Eldershaw" is two persons —Marjorie Barnard Eldershaw and Flora S. Eldershaw. In "Essays in Australian Fiction" they deal with eight writers who have helped their country out of "the dark ages of a few years ago." Colonial and even empire boundaries have already been crossed by Henry Handel Richardson and Katherine Prichard. A new book by Christina Stead is international news. Dawn is at hand in Australia. Yet the strength of the new writers lies largely in their memory of bleak yesterdays and their recognition of present problems in bush, paddock, and settlement. Their comfort is bravely found in the "unexploited charm of work" and the sober beauty of the land.

The Eldershaws' book is generous-toned but sane—a testament perhaps, but no panegyric. Its method is not scientific. Readers who must have statistics with their criticism will be puzzled by the quiet affirmations here set down. The authors' fine intuitions are carried by bold, figurative language which sometimes stumbles into awkwardness but more often proceeds swiftly to its objective. Critics prone to put too much trust in formal scholarly apparatus might well learn a lesson from these self-reliant writers.

A. C.

Fiction

THE DOOMSDAY MEN. By J. B. Priestley. Harpers. 1938. $2.50.

This tale of adventure in the Mohave Desert was perhaps designed to enable Priestley to charge off some of his traveling expenses from his taxable income. An air of mild amiability suffuses it, even though it includes a murder and a kidnapping, and centers around the plan of a mad scientist to blow up the world; Priestley writes with such pleasure of homely good people that it is hard to believe him when he deals with the wicked and bizarre. But it is easy summer reading, with some discerning and amusing comments on Los Angeles, and descriptions of Southwestern scenery that communicate the author's excitement to the reader.

E. D.

THE MAN FROM COOK'S. By Polan Banks. Lee Furman. 1938. $2.50.

Polan Banks has written several middling historical novels, but the latest of them, based upon the life of Thomas Cook and his travel agency during the years 1848-98, is impressive neither as history nor romance. Cook was a temperance zealot and an altruist who saw his business as a missionary enterprise for the promotion of international understanding, but his son John, dubbed by Kipling "the man with the iron mouth," saw in it only a means to personal power. The narrator, Chris, was John's best friend, for they had grown up together with the common ambition of travel. Chris's first big job was as agent for the firm in the Paris office, where he fell in love with the lady Diana, a wealthy, mercenary wench who regarded him merely as "the man from Cook's," but Chris stuck by her when they were trapped during the ghastly siege of the Franco-Prussian war.

Paris was starving; rats and elephants from the zoo were eaten. It was all pretty romantic to Chris until his spoiled darling betrayed him and the Cook relief train arrived with the news that because of his infatuation he had lost his job. When he regained it twelve years later, John sent him as Special Agent to Egypt. Gordon was then being besieged at Khartoum, the Nile was Cook's chief travel route, and on it floated—by one of the many coincidences in the life of the hero; he called it Fate—the stepdaughter Vicky of the lost Diana. Cook's was empowered to transport the abortive relief expedition of the British, but Chris would have none of it, for his life was to be a typical MGM desert romance from that time on. The formula rarely varies: the heroine is captured by wild tribesmen, the hero pursues her in disguise, and blood stains the sand that had warmed the lovers' hearts but a while ago. The author seems to have run shy of dramatic material on Thomas Cook and Son, and so padded his book gratuitously. His scenes of siege are excellent and his portraits good, but they scarcely build to a novel.

H. D.

LET X EQUAL MARJORIE. By Edward Hope. Macrae-Smith. 1938. $2.

Jimmy Hawtrey's father left him a fortune and directed that $12,000 a year be paid to a girl Jimmy had never seen. Then the depression removed the fortune except for $12,000 a year.

Because he wants to marry the woman he thinks he loves, Jimmy pursues his unknown dependent to the Riviera in the hope that she can spare him some of his own income. Complications are born of complications until Jimmy finds that his true love and his income are both enjoyed by the same person.

This is light fiction without pretenses and, if you don't mind nondescript characters, enjoyable. The idea for the story is a trifle better than the treatment it gets, but the dialogue is consistently good and sometimes witty. When the dialogue lapses into dialect, however, it suffers.

M. S.

SECRET INFORMATION. By Robert Hichens. Doubleday, Doran. 1938. $2.50.

Those who still think of Robert Hichens as a purveyor of lush romance in tropical settings may be surprised to find that his new book has no heroine,—indeed no women characters of any importance. The story is concerned with an Anglican residentiary Canon in a cathedral town who has a locked cupboard full of "rare and curious" books. One day in a sermon he incautiously quotes from Frank Harris; a shrewd lawyer happens to be in his congregation, recognizes the passage, and decides to amuse himself by probing the matter. Next the clergyman's butler stumbles on his master's secret, and the poor Canon has a hard time of it before he gets rid of his erotic books and squares his conscience. This plot is scarcely more than an anecdote taken by itself, but Mr. Hichens spins it out with astonishing virtuosity until in the end the Canon's dilemma takes on real ethical importance. Always an accomplished story-teller, the author gives us a stimulating initial situation, a dry but penetrating study of a man's divided nature, and an unexpectedly thought-provoking climax in the final interview between the Canon and his tormentor. The whole is one of the best products of this veteran novelist's later years. And lovers of his "Bella Donna" manner will be relieved to hear that he does manage to work in a camel or two at the end.

T. P., Jr.

BOOK OF KINGS. By Philip Freund. Pilgrim House. 1938. $2.50.

It would be neither fair nor accurate to say, "just another family chronicle," for there is no reason why family chronicles couldn't be published one every week, with quality and interest in every one. This particular chronicle happens to be on the dull side, because Mr. Freund wrote it that way. The Lauers and the Zoltans might have been an engrossing set of characters if he had been more engrossed with them, jumped in and either released their emotions or communicated some of his own to the story. Since he did neither, and since we cannot generate interest without some sort of stimulus,

Advertisement? You bet.—And a damned good one!

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE BEAST MUST DIE *Nicholas Blake* *(C. Day Lewis)* (Harpers: $2.)	Crime novelist Felix Lane plots murder as revenge on hit-&-run driver, but it takes Nigel Strangeways to discover who really killed Gloucestershire road-hog.	Extremely ingenious plotting, with Felix Lane's diary leading reader by the nose, provides double surprise in excellent super-literate baffler.	Don't miss it

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the results are dubious. There is a long, disconnected series of incidents in the family's history, with little apparent significance anywhere. Mr. Freund has written two other books that were well received, according to the dust jacket. This one, then, gives little indication of his capacities.

N. L. R.

Miscellaneous

EACH DAWN I DIE. By Jerome Odlum. Bobbs-Merrill. 1938. $2.

THE BIG HOUSE OF MYSTERY. By Patrick H. Weeks, M.D. Dorrance & Co. 1938. $2.

The author of the first of these books, a Minneapolis newspaperman, was probably not primarily interested in adding to the public's knowledge of prisons. His novel is the story of a reporter who was framed up by a political ring he had exposed, was sent to prison, and finally was exonerated and released after a series of hair-raising experiences. The novel has at least two good points: the leading characters talk like real prisoners and there is an occasional bit of description or action that is good reporting of authentic prison stuff.

But what Reporter Odlum has the hero, Reporter Ross, go through should have been printed on celluloid instead of wood-pulp. Only in the prison movies should the hero have *all* the experiences that anyone ever had, the heroine be so steadfast, the warden so brutal, the guards so sadistic, the "rats" so cunning and so ubiquitous, and the long arm of coincidence so certain to reach out and snatch the bandage from the eyes of Blind Justice. Hollywood might well be interested, for here is a script for another thin, super-claptrap prison movie.

Dr. Weeks' book, "The Big House of Mystery," is based on his experiences as physician and psychiatrist of the Indiana State Prison during the past eighteen years. It will be a great disappointment to sociologists and to prison officials and can satisfy only the most uninformed general reader. The book consists of a series of loosely joined stories about individual prisoners, many of them uninteresting or discussed without bringing out any information of value. Giving the text whatever thread of continuity it has are chapters on drug addiction, murder and capital punishment, sex offenders, and so on. These subjects are dealt with superficially and the chapters are sophomoric in style. The references to capital punishment are cautious in the extreme: in the final two paragraphs on this subject every sentence contains some such weak words as "perhaps," "possibly," "theoretically," "may be," "may have," and "seems."

The authors can, if they wish, comfort themselves with the thought that very few really good books have ever been written about prisons. The dramatic quality of prison life causes some authors to overwrite, while others write sloppily in the belief that the public will gobble up anything about prisons. Even "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" has its weak spots.

A. H. MacC.

PERSONALS

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GENERAL

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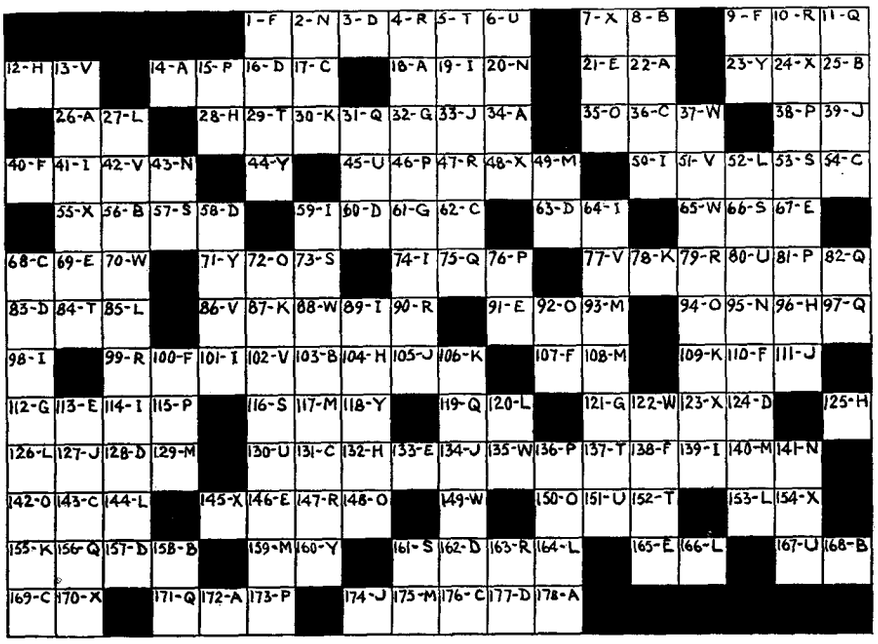
Double-Crostics: No. 228

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double-Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Rich, sweet, aromatic wine.

B. Angel of Death (Jew. and Moham.).

C. King of Ostrogoths (454?-526).

D. Formed of little mosaics.

E. Dweller.

F. Shelter closely.

G. Shake as a signal.

H. Cite as authority.

I. Jewish New Year (2 wds.).

J. Quality of being fresh.

K. Like a simpleton.

L. Eighteenth century English china.

M. Individually distinct.

N. Vex, disturb.

O. Novel by Charlotte Brontë.

P. Perverse.

Q. Character in "Twelfth Night."

R. Full of jollity.

S. English diarist (1620-1706).

T. Prices fixed according to standard.

U. Author of "Methodus Fluxionum."

V. Assimilate.

W. Gallop and triumph (Lewis Carroll).

X. Famous ship of Colonial times (2 wds.).

Y. Author of "Jerusalem Delivered."

WORDS

14 172 178 18 34 22 26

56 103 8 168 25 158

17 68 54 36 62 143 131 176 169

63 83 16 58 60 177 157 128 124 162 3

91 146 21 69 67 113 133 165

138 1 107 100 9 110 40

121 61 112 32

132 12 104 96 125 28

101 64 114 59 89 19 98 74 41 139 50

33 39 111 105 127 134 174

78 30 155 87 106 109

126 166 144 27 85 153 52 120 164

49 159 93 140 129 117 175 108

2 20 43 95 141

94 142 92 148 150 72 35

15 173 115 46 76 136 38 81

171 11 97 31 119 82 156 75

4 147 47 90 99 163 79 10

73 53 66 161 116 57

137 5 152 29 84

6 167 45 130 151 80

102 86 77 42 51 13

88 149 65 37 70 135 122

170 123 48 145 55 7 154 24

118 44 71 160 23

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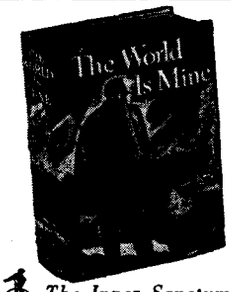

The Inner Sanctum has just published *The World Is Mine* by WILLIAM J. BLAKE.

The World Is Mine is the story of a modern MONTE CRISTO and is far and away your correspondent's most extraordinary, most audacious, most ambitious effort in the publishing of fiction. It is 741 pages long, a modern, romantic picaresque novel which is also a history of Western Europe since 1892, and a melodrama of ideas with a vengeance, "painted on a ten-league canvas with brushes of comet's hair."

The World Is Mine is the story of CRISTOBAL PINSON, whose passion for revenge against the system and men who destroyed the fortunes of his family drives him until he becomes the modern MONTE CRISTO, the wealthiest man in the world. His rise is amazing, his methods are fantastic, his triumphs and disasters improbable—yet IVAR KRUGER'S career was not totally dissimilar.

The entire last quarter of the book takes place in present-day Spain, to which CRISTOBAL returns prepared to pit his giant resources on the side of the Loyalists.

Here is one of the first reactions from a reader to whom *The Inner Sanctum* sent an advance copy:

"*The World Is Mine* is a contradiction in terms: a yarn that is intelligent, a tall tale which is, at the same time, an encyclopedia of information. Did I say a yarn? It is an *anthology* of the world's unequaled melodramas—including rags, riches, rogues, reformers and roués—plus a guide to comparative literature, a handbook on economics and a textbook on social theory. But first and last it's a story, a narrative Niagara, a dynamo on the loose."

—LOUIS UNTERMYER

Perhaps your correspondents may be too obsessed with the glamor and drama of the eternal ALEXANDER DUMAS legend—but they believe that the unde niable sweep and suspense of this book, its vast social vision and implications, make it in truth the extravagant story of a modern MONTE CRISTO.

—ESSANDESS

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

THE letter written by Joseph Conrad (June 2, 1923) to the sailing ship *Tusitala* has been given by her owner James A. Farrell to the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. The old vessel, whose history is familiar to many of our readers, was sold recently to the "Marine Liquidating Corporation" of Fall River, Mass., to be broken up. Conrad's manuscript letter will be placed in the Conrad Memorial Library at the Seamen's Institute. ☞Stephen Vincent Benét's fable *Johnny Pye and the Foolkiller* has been issued in a de luxe format by The Countryman Press; the trade edition will be published by Farrar & Rinehart on August 8. ☞Old Q., feebly standing by the classics, learns with grief that the Congregation of Oxford University has voted to translate the Statutes of that university, whose humorous dog-Latin has amused students for centuries, into mere English. What a pity! Consider, as our friend John Mistletoe used to insist, how agreeable were such rubrics as De Domibus Oppidanorum non frequentandis and De Reverentia Juniorum erga Seniores. Under the Statute De Vehiculis an ancient ruling was delightfully recomposed to cover flying by an undergraduate; he is forbidden, without the Proctors' permission, *in aera curru ascendere, nisi qui vel Universitatis Aerobatorum cohorti vel aera Labentium Societati prius fuerit adscriptus.* This last refers to the Oxford Gliding Club which was established just this spring. ☞Though not much of a stamp collector we have been pleased to see the new French 2-franc timbre-postes showing a charming little picture of Alphonse Daudet's windmill. Though we haven't read him since school days we think of A.D. affectionately as one of the pleasantest of writers. The stamp, we suppose, is to mark the centennial of his birth (1940).

☞When old Q. received The Institute Publishing Company's shiny blue and silver volume, *Thoughts for Food — A Menu Aid,* he turned it over to his secretary, Susy Q., who has just started housekeeping. Her daily reports are glowing, often rapturous; and the blueberry muffins she brought him one morning were nourishing proof of the merits of the book. Susy says the compiler has done a thorough piece of work: each of the 125 menus is accompanied by recipes for *each* dish, including sauces and dressings. Whether taste runs to Filet of Sole Wanamaker or Hamburgers de Luxe, *Thoughts for Food* is a tasteworthy guide.

☞The best news we have had lately was a letter from that well-loved Caliph of Ink, Mr. A. Edward Newton, in his own hand. He reports that after more than a year of grievous illness he is positively better and can now "look surgeons and physicians in the face and tell them where to go." ☞Apropos physicians, in the always exciting catalogue of the American Autograph Shop at Merion Station, Pa., is offered a grand letter (date 1830) from the young Oliver Wendell

Holmes resisting temptation in an offer of book-exchange. In spite of "yearnings in my heart for the venerable folios" he remains firm; he says that "the cacodemon who interferes with so many of our wishes" (viz., his sense of fiscal propriety) forbids him. ☞We have had further opportunity to mull over the Colophon *Annual of Book Making;* which to any student of print is the extreme of pleasure. Secretly we think it shows up (without their suspecting it) one or two overpersianized designers; it gives a gorgeous panorama of the fun and fanfaronade of tony typography and is a thrilling album of achievement. ☞Among its many amusements we got a particular grin out of Peter Beilenson's piece about the labors of his three imprints (the Peter Pauper, the Walpole, and The Blue-Behinded Ape) and made a private note of that enigmatic item of rarissima *The Vulgaries of a Louse-Wife* (1931). ☞Fortunately few people know what scholarly frolic is to be had in the printing trade or it would be even more overcrowded than it is. ☞Carl Rollins contributes a piece on the remarkable issues of the Limited Editions Club, sponsored by the cognoscentissimo Mr. George Macy; it is indeed an astonishing line-up of titles when you see them all listed together. When will the L. E. Club do us something by Conrad; some of his superb less-known numbers? ☞And what news is there of John Winterich's new book of literary parachuting which was promised by some Book Club in California? ☞In the same Annual, answering our own recent query, we noted that Rimington and Hooper did a *Zadig* in 1930 and the Fleuron Press ditto in 1926. But did anyone read them? Does anyone read de luxe issues? ☞Tommy Cleland remains one of our most favorite designers for many of our best moods. ☞But if you get started gossipping about this Colophon Annual there's no end. Better write to the Colophon office (229 West 43, N. Y. C.) and see if you can make a deal to get it in your Summer stocking.

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